

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

TRANSLATED BY
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INTRODUCTION

§ 1. Contents, Division, and Object of the Book of Nehemiah

This book, according to its title, contains **דְּבָרֵי נְחֵמְיָה**, and in it Nehemiah relates, almost always in the first person, his journey to Jerusalem, and the work which he there effected. **דְּבָרֵי נְחֵמְיָה**, used as the title of a work, signifies not narratives, but deeds and experiences, and consequently here the history of Nehemiah. Apart from the contents of the book, this title might, in conformity with the twofold meaning of **דְּבָרִים**, verba and res, designate both the words or discourses and the acts or undertakings of Nehemiah. But **דְּבָרֵי** means words, discourses, only in the titles of prophetic or didactic books, i.e., writings of men whose vocation was the announcement of the word: comp. e.g., Jer. 1: 1, Hos. 1: 1, and others. In historical writings, on the contrary, the **דְּבָרֵי** of the men whose lives and acts are described, are their deeds and experiences: thus **דְּבָרֵי דָוִד**, 1Ch. 29:29; **דְּבָרֵי שְׁלֹמֹה**, written **דְּבָרֵי שְׁלֹמֹה דְּבַר עַל סֵפֶר** 1Ki. 11:41, comp. 2Ch. 9:29, — the history of David, of Solomon; **דְּבָרֵי יִרְבֵּעָם**, 1Ki. 14:19, the acts of Jeroboam, which are more exactly defined by the addition **אֲשֶׁר נִלְחַם וְאֲשֶׁר מָלַךְ**. So, too, in the case of the other kings, when reference is made to historical works concerning their reigns. It is in this sense that the title of the present book must be understood; and hence both Luther and de Wette have correctly translated it: the history of Nehemiah. Hence the title only testifies to the fact, that the work at the head of which it stands treats of the things, i.e., of the acts, of Nehemiah, and the events that happened to him, without stating anything concerning its author. That Nehemiah was himself the historian of his own deeds, appears only from the circumstance that the narrative is written in the first person.

The contents of the book are as follows: Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah, a Jew, of whom nothing further is known, and cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus, is plunged into deep affliction by the account he receives from his brother Hanani, and certain other men from Judah, of the sad condition of those who had returned from Babylon, and especially of the state of the ruined walls and gates of Jerusalem. He entreats with fervent

supplications the mercy of God (Neh. 1), and shortly after seizes a favourable opportunity to request the king to send him to Judah to build the city of his fathers' sepulchres, and to give him letters to the governors on the other side of Euphrates, that they may provide him with wood for building from the royal forests. This petition being graciously acceded to by the monarch, he travels, accompanied by captains of forces and horsemen, to Jerusalem, and soon after his arrival rides by night round the city, accompanied by some few companions, to ascertain the state of the walls. He then communicates to the rulers of the people his resolution to build and restore the walls, and invites them to undertake this work with him (Neh. 2). Then follows in Neh. 3: 1-32 a list of the individuals and families who built the several portions of the wall with their gates; and in Neh. 3:33-6:19, an account of the difficulties Nehemiah had to overcome in the prosecution of the work, viz.:

- (1) the attempts of the enemies of the Jews forcibly to oppose and hinder the building, by reason of which the builders were obliged to work with weapons in their hands (Neh. 3:33-4:17);
- (2) the oppression of the poorer members of the community by wealthy usurers, which Nehemiah put a stop to by seriously reproofing their injustice, and by his own great unselfishness (Neh. 5); and
- (3) the plots made against his life by his enemies, which he frustrated by the courageous faith with which he encountered them.

Thus the building of the wall was, notwithstanding all these difficulties, brought to a successful termination (Neh. 6). — This work accomplished, Nehemiah directed his efforts towards securing the city against hostile attacks by appointing watches at the gates (Neh. 7: 1-3, and increasing the numbers of the dwellers in Jerusalem; in pursuance of which design, he assembled the nobles and people for the purpose of enrolling their names according to their genealogy (Neh. 7: 4, 5). While occupied with this matter, he found a list of those houses of Judah that had returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua; and this he gives, Neh. 7: 6-73. Then, on the approach of the seventh month of the year, the people assembled at Jerusalem to hear the public reading of the law by Ezra, to keep the new moon and the feast of this month, and, after the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, to observe a day of prayer and fasting, on which occasion the Levites making confession of sin in the name of the congregation, they renewed their covenant with God by entering into an oath to keep the law. This covenant being committed to writing, was sealed by Nehemiah as governor, by the chiefs of the priests, of the Levites, and of the houses of the people, and the contributions for the support of the worship of God and its ministers arranged (8-10). The decision arrived at concerning the increase of the inhabitants of Jerusalem was next carried into execution, one of every ten dwellers in the provinces being chosen by lot to go to Jerusalem and dwell there (Neh. 11: 1, 2). Then follow lists,

(1) of the houses and races who dwelt in Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah and Benjamin (Neh. 11: 3-36);

(2) of the priestly and Levitical families who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua, and of the heads of priestly and Levitical families in the days of Joiakim the high priest, Nehemiah, and Ezra (Neh. 12: 1-26).

These are succeeded by an account of the solemn dedication of the walls (Neh. 12:27-43). Then, finally, after some general remarks on certain institutions of divine worship, and an account of a public reading of the law (Neh. 12:44-13: 3), the book concludes with a brief narration of what Nehemiah effected during his second sojourn there, after his journey to the court in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, and his return for the purpose of putting a stop to certain illegal acts which had prevailed during his absence, such as marriages with heathen women, non-payment of tithes and dues to Levites, desecration of the Sabbath by field-labour, and by buying and selling (Neh. 13: 4-31).

According to what has been stated, this book may be divided into three sections. The first, chs. 1-6, treats of the building of the walls and gates of Jerusalem through the instrumentality of Nehemiah; the narrative concerning the occasion of his journey, and the account of the journey itself (Neh. 1: 1-2:10), forming the introduction. The second, chs. 7-12:43, furnishes a description of the further efforts of Nehemiah to increase and ensure the prosperity of the community in Judah and Jerusalem, first, by securing Jerusalem from hostile attacks; then, by seeking to increase the population of the city; and, lastly, by endeavouring to bring the domestic and civil life of the people into conformity with the precepts of the law, and thus to furnish the necessary moral and religious basis for the due development of the covenant people. The third, Neh. 12:44-13:31, states how Nehemiah, during his second sojourn at Jerusalem, continued these efforts for the purpose of ensuring the permanence of the reform which had been undertaken.

The aim of Nehemiah's proceedings was to place the civil prosperity of the Israelites, now returned from exile to the land of their fathers, on a firm basis. Briefly to describe what he effected, at one time by direct personal effort, at another in conjunction with his contemporary Ezra the priest and scribe, is the object of his record. As Nehemiah's efforts for the civil welfare of his people as the congregation of the Lord were but a continuation of those by which Zerubbabel the prince, Joshua the high priest, and Ezra the scribe had effected the foundation of the community of returned exiles, so too does his book form the continuation and completion of that of Ezra, and may in this respect be regarded as its second part. It is, moreover, not merely similar in kind, to the book of Ezra, especially with regard to the insertion of historical and statistical lists and genealogical registries, but has also the same historical object, viz., to

show how the people of Israel, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, were by the instrumentality of Nehemiah fully re-established in the land of promise as the congregation of the Lord.

§ 2. Integrity of the Book of Nehemiah, and Date of Its Composition

Nehemiah gives his account of the greater part of his labours for the good of his fellow-countrymen in the first person; and this form of narrative is not only uniformly maintained throughout the first six chapters (from Neh. 1: 1-7: 5), but also recurs in Neh. 12:27-43, and from Neh. 13: 6 to the end. The formula too: Think upon me, my God, etc., peculiar to Nehemiah, is repeated Neh. 5:19, 6:14, 13:14, 22, 29, 31. Hence not only has the composition of the larger portion of this book been universally admitted to be the work of Nehemiah, but the integrity of its first section (1-6) has been generally acknowledged. On the composition and authorship of the second section, Neh. 7:73b -12:26, on the contrary, the verdict of modern criticism is almost unanimous in pronouncing it not to have been the work of Nehemiah, but composed from various older documents and records by the compiler of the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah — the so-called chronicler who lived a hundred years later — and by him interpolated in “the record of Nehemiah.” This view has been chiefly based upon the facts, that in chs. 8-10 the style is different; that Nehemiah himself is not the prominent person, Ezra occupying the foreground, and Nehemiah being merely the subject of a passing remark (Neh. 8: 9 and 10: 2); that there is in Neh. 8:14 no reference to Ezr. 3: 4 with respect to the feast of tabernacles; and that Ezr. 3: 1 is in verbal accordance with Neh. 8: 1 (Bertheau, Comm. p. 11, and de Wette-Schrader, Einl. in das A. T. § 236). Of these reasons, the first (the dissimilarity of style) is an assertion arising from a superficial examination of these chapters, and in support of which nothing further is adduced than that, instead of Elohim, and especially the God of heaven, elsewhere current with Nehemiah when speaking of God, the names Jehovah, Adonai, and Elohim are in this section used promiscuously. In fact, however, the name Elohim is chiefly used even in these chapters, and Jahve but seldom; while in the prayer Neh. 9 especially, such other appellations of God occur as Nehemiah, with the solemnity befitting the language of supplication, uses also in the prayer in Neh. 1. ⁿ

The other three reasons are indeed correct, in so far as they are actual facts, but they prove nothing. It is true that in Neh. 8-10 Nehemiah personally occupies a less prominent position than Ezra, but this is because the actions therein related, viz., the public reading of the law, and the direction of the sacred festivals, belonged not to the office of Nehemiah the Tirshatha and royal

governor, but to that, of Ezra the scribe, and to the priests and Levites. Even here, however, Nehemiah, as the royal Tirshatha, stands at the head of the assembled people, encourages them in conjunction with Ezra and the priests, and is the first, as *praecipuum membrum ecclesiae* (Neh. 10: 2), to seal the document of the covenant just concluded. Again, though it is certain that in the description of the feast of tabernacles, Neh. 8:14f., there is no express allusion to its former celebration under Zerubbabel and Joshua, Ezr. 3: 4, yet such allusions are unusual with biblical writers in general. This is shown, e.g., by a comparison of 2Ch. 35: 1, 18 with 2Ch. 30: 1, 13-26; and yet it has never struck any critic that an argument against the single authorship of 2Ch. might be found in the fact that no allusion to the earlier passover held under Hezekiah, 2Ch. 30, is made in the description of the passover under Josiah, 2Ch. 35. Finally, the verbal coincidence of Neh. 8: 1 (properly 7:73b and 8: 1) with Ezr. 3: 1 amounts to the statement that “when the seventh month was come, all Israel gathered out of their cities as one man to Jerusalem.” All else is totally different; the assembly in Neh. 8 pursues entirely different objects and undertakes entirely different matters from that in Ezr. 3. The peculiarities, moreover, of Nehemiah’s style could as little appear in what is narrated, chs. 8-10, as in his description of the building of the wall, Ezr. 3: 1-32, or in the list of the families who returned from captivity with Zerubbabel and Joshua, Neh. 7 — portions which no one has yet seriously objected to as integral parts of the book of Nehemiah. The same remark applies to the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the province, Neh. 11: 3-36, which even Bertheau and Schrader admit to have originated from the record of Nehemiah, or to have been composed by Nehemiah. If, however, Nehemiah composed these lists, or incorporated them in his record, why should it not also be himself, and not the “subsequent chronicler,” who inserted in his work the lists of priests and Levites, Neh. 12: 1-26, when the description of the dedication of the wall which immediately follows them is evidently his own composition?

One reason for maintaining that these lists of priests and Levites are of later origin than the times of Nehemiah is said to be, that they extend to Jaddua the high priest, who was contemporary with Alexander the Great. If this assertion were as certain as it is confidently brought forward, then indeed these lists might well be regarded as a subsequent interpolation in the book of Nehemiah. For Nehemiah, who was at least thirty years of age when he first came to Jerusalem, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, i.e., B.C. 445, could hardly have lived to witness the overthrow of the Persian monarchy by Alexander, B.C. 330; or, even if he did attain the age of 145, would not have postponed the writing of his book to the last years of his life. When, however, we consider somewhat more closely the priests and Levites in question, we shall perceive that vv. 1-9 of Neh. 12 contain a list of the chiefs of the priests and Levites who

returned from captivity with Zerubbabel and Joshua, which consequently descends from the times before Nehemiah; vv. 12-21, a list of the heads of the priestly houses in the days of the high priest Joiakim, the son of Joshua; and vv. 24 and 25, a list of the heads of chiefs of Levi (of the Levites), with the closing remark, v. 26: "These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Joshua, and in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra," Now the high priest Joiakim, the son of Joshua, the contemporary of Zerubbabel, was the predecessor and father of the high priest Eliashib, the contemporary of Nehemiah. Consequently both these lists descend from the time previous to Nehemiah's arrival at Jerusalem; and the mention of Ezra and Nehemiah along with Joiakim proves nothing more than that the chiefs of the Levites mentioned in the last list were still living in the days of Nehemiah. Thus these three lists contain absolutely nothing which reaches to a period subsequent to Nehemiah. Between the first and second, however, there stands (vv. 10 and 11) the genealogical notice: Joshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim begat Eliashib, Eliashib begat Jonathan (correct reading, Johanan), and Jonathan begat Jaddua; and between the second and third it is said, v. 22: With respect to the Levites, in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, the heads of houses are recorded, and the priests under the reign of Darius the Persian; and v. 23: With respect to the sons of Levi, the heads of houses are recorded in the book of the Chronicles even to the days of Johanan. From these verses (10, 11, and 22, 23) it is inferred that the lists descend to the time of the high-priesthood of Jaddua, the contemporary of Alexander the Great. To this we reply, that viewing the circumstance that Eliashib was high priest in the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 3: 1, 13: 4, 7), it cannot be an absolute objection that Jaddua was still living in the days of Alexander the Great, since from the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, i.e., from B.C. 433, to the destruction of the Persian empire B.C. 330, there are only 103 years, a period for which three high priests, each exercising his office thirty-five years, would suffice. But on the other hand, it is very questionable whether in vv. 11 and 12 Jaddua is mentioned as the officiating high priest, or only as the son of Johanan, and grandson of Joiada the high priest. The former of these views receives no corroboration from v. 11, for there nothing else is given but the genealogy of the high-priestly line. Nor can it any more be proved from v. 22 that the words, "in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, were the Levites recorded or enrolled," are to be understood of four different lists made under four successive high priests. The most natural sense of the words, on the contrary, is that one enrollment took place in the days of these four individuals of the high-priestly house. If Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were all alive at the same time, this, the most natural view, must also be the correct one, because in each of the other lists of the same chapter, the times of only one high priest are mentioned, and at the close of the list, v. 26, it is expressly stated that the (previously enrolled) Levites were chiefs in the days of Joiakim, Ezra, and

Nehemiah. It is not, moreover, difficult to prove that Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were living contemporaneously. For Eliashib, whom Nehemiah found high priest at his arrival at Jerusalem (Neh. 3: 1), being the grandson of Joshua, who returned from Babylon in the year 536 with Zerubbabel, would in 445 be anything but a young man. Indeed, he must then have been about seventy-five years old. Moreover, it appears from Neh. 13: 4 and 7, that in 433, when Nehemiah returned to Artaxerxes, he was still in office, though on Nehemiah's return he was no longer alive, and that he therefore died soon after 433, at the age of about ninety. If, however, this was his age when he died, his son Joiada might then be already sixty-three, his grandson Johanan thirty-six, his great-grandson Jaddua nine, if each were respectively born in the twenty-seventh year of his father's lifetime.¹²

The view (of vv. 11, 12, and 22) just stated, is confirmed both by vv. 22b and 23, and by Neh. 13:28. According to 22b, the chiefs or heads of the priestly houses were enrolled under the government of Darius the Persian. Now there is no doubt that this Darius is Darius Nothus, the successor of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned from 424 to 404. The notion that Darius Codomanus is intended, rests upon the mistaken view that in v. 11 Jaddua is mentioned as the high priest already in office. According to v. 23, the heads of the houses of the Levites were enrolled in the book of the Chronicles even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib. The days of Johanan — that is, the period of his high-priesthood — are here named as the latest date to which the author of this book extends the genealogical lists of the Levites. And this well agrees with the information, Neh. 13:18, that during Nehemiah's absence at Jerusalem, one of the sons of Joiada the high priest allied himself by marriage with Sanballat the Horonite, i.e., married one of his daughters, and was driven away by Nehemiah. If Joiada had even in the days of Nehemiah a married son, Johanan the first-born son of Joiada, the presumptive successor to the high-priesthood, might well have been at that time so long a married man as to have already witnessed the birth of his son Jaddua.

To complete our proof that the contents of Neh. 12 do not extend to a period subsequent to Nehemiah, we have still to discuss the question, how long he held office in Judaea, and when he wrote the book in which he relates what he there effected. Both these questions can be answered with sufficient accuracy for our purpose, though the exact year cannot be named. Concerning the time he held office in Jerusalem, he only remarks in his book that he was governor from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, and that in the thirty-second year of that monarch he again returned to the court, and afterwards, **לְקֵץ יָמַי**, came back to Jerusalem (Neh. 5:14, and 13: 6). The term **לְקֵץ יָמַי** is very indefinite; but the interpretation, "at the end of the year," is incorrect and

unsupported. It is quite evident, from the irregularities and transgressions of the law which occurred in the community during his absence from Jerusalem, that Nehemiah must have remained longer than a year at the court, and, indeed, that he did not return for some years. Besides the withholding of the dues to the Levites (Neh. 13:10f.) and the desecration of the Sabbath (Neh. 13:15f.), — transgressions of the law which might have occurred soon after Nehemiah's departure, — Eliashib had not only the priest fitted up a chamber in the fore-court of the temple as a dwelling for his connection Tobiah (Neh. 13: 4), but Jews had also married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab, and had children by them who spake not the Jews' language, but only that of Ashdod, in the interval (Neh. 13:23). These facts presuppose an absence of several years on the part of Nehemiah, even if many of these unlawful marriages had been previously contracted, and only came to his knowledge after his return. — Neither are there adequate grounds for the notion that Nehemiah lived but a short time after his return to Jerusalem. The suppression of these infringements of the law, which is narrated Neh. 13: 7-31, might, indeed, have been accomplished in a few months; but we are by no means justified in inferring that this was the last of his labours for the welfare of his fellow-countrymen, and that his own life terminated soon after, because he relates nothing more than his procedure against these transgressions. After the removal of these irregularities, and the re-establishment of legal order in divine worship and social life, he might have lived for a long period at Jerusalem without effecting anything, the record of which it might be important to hand down to posterity. If we suppose him to have been from thirty-five to forty years of age when, being cupbearer to Artaxerxes, he was sent at his own request, in the twentieth year of that monarch's reign (445 B.C.), as governor to Judah, he might well have exercised his office in Judah and Jerusalem from thirty-five to forty years, including his journey back to the court in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, i.e., till 405 B.C. This would make him live till the nineteenth year of Darius Nothus, and not die till he was from seventy-five to eighty years of age. If we further suppose that he composed this book some ten years before his death, i.e., thirty years after his first arrival at Jerusalem, when he had, as far as lay in his power, arranged the affairs of Judah, it would then be possible for him to relate and describe all that is contained in the canonical book of Nehemiah. For in the year 415 B.C., i.e., in the ninth year of Darius Nothus, genealogical lists of priests and Levites of the time of Joiakim the high priest, reaching down to the days of Johanan the son (grandson) of Eliashib, and of the time of the reign of Darius Nothus, might already be written in the book of the Chronicles, as mentioned 12:23, compared with 22 and 26. Then, too, the high priest Joiada might already have been dead, his son Johanan have succeeded to the office, and Jaddua, the son of the latter, have already attained the age of twenty-five. — This book would consequently contain no historical information and no single

remark which Nehemiah might not himself have written. Hence the contents of the book itself furnish not the slightest opposition to the view that the whole was the work of Nehemiah.

When, however, we turn our attention to its form, that unity of character to which modern criticism attaches so much importance seems to be wanting in the second half. We have, however, already remarked that neither the lack of prominence given to the person of Nehemiah, nor the circumstance that he is in these chapters spoken of in the third person, furnish incontestable arguments against the integrity of this book. For in the section concerning the dedication of the wall, 12:27-43, Nehemiah's authorship of which no critic has as yet impugned, he only brings himself forward (31 and 38) when mentioning what he had himself appointed and done, while the rest of the narrative is not in the communicative form of speech: we sought the Levites, we offered, etc., which he employs in the account of the making of a covenant, but in the objective form: they sought the Levites, they offered, etc. (27 and 43). The want of connection between the several sections seems to us far more striking. Chs. 8-10 form, indeed, a connected section, the commencement of which (Neh. 7:73b) by the circumstantial clause, "when the children of Israel dwelt in their cities," combines it, even by a repetition of the very form of words, which the preceding list; but the commencement of Neh. 11 is somewhat abrupt, while between 11 and 12 and between vv. 26 and 27 of Neh. 12 there is nothing to mark the connection. This gives the sections, chs. 8-10 and Neh. 12: 1-26, the appearance of being subsequent interpolations or insertions in Nehemiah's record; and there is thus much of real foundation for this appearance, that this book is not a continuous narrative or description of Nehemiah's proceedings in Judah, — historical, topographical, and genealogical lists, which interrupt the thread of the history, being inserted in it. But it by no means follows, that because such is the nature of the book, the inserted portions must therefore have been the subsequent interpolations of another hand, in the record composed by Nehemiah. This inference of modern criticism is based upon an erroneous conception of the nature and intention of this book, which is first of all regarded, if not as a biography or diary of Nehemiah, yet as a "record," in which is noted down only the most important facts concerning his journey to Jerusalem and his proceedings there. For this preconception, neither the canonical book of Nehemiah, nor a comparison of those sections which are universally admitted to be his, furnish any adequate support. For with regard, first, to these sections, it is obvious from v. 14, where Nehemiah during the building of the wall reproaches the usurers, saying, "From the time that I was appointed to be governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth to the two-and-thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor," that Nehemiah wrote the account of his

labours in Judah from memory after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes. When we compare with this the manner in which he speaks quite incidentally (Neh. 13: 6f.) of his absence from Jerusalem and his journey to the court, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, and connects the account of the chamber vacated for Tobiah in the fore-court of the temple (Neh. 13: 4) with the previous narrative of the public reading of the law and the severance of the strangers from Israel by the formula **וְלִפְנֵי מִזֶּה**, “and before this,” making it appear as though this public reading of the law and severance of strangers had followed his return from the court; and further, consider that the public reading of the law mentioned, Neh. 13: 1, is combined with the section, Neh. 12:44, and this section again (Neh. 12:44) with the account of the dedication of the wall by the formula, “at that time;” it is undoubtedly obvious that Nehemiah did not write his whole work till the evening of his days, and after he had accomplished all that was most important in the labours he undertook for Jerusalem and his fellow-countrymen, and that he makes no decided distinction between his labours during his second sojourn at Jerusalem and those of his former stay of twelve years.

If, then, these circumstances indisputably show that the work composed by Nehemiah himself did not bear the form of a diary, the admission into it of the list of those who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua (Neh. 7: 6-73) makes it manifest that it was not his intention to give an unbroken narrative, of his efforts and their results in Jerusalem. This list, moreover, which he found when occupied with his plan for increasing the population of Jerusalem, is shown by the words, “I found therein written,” to have been admitted by himself into his work, and inserted in his account of what God had put it into his heart to do with respect to the peopling of Jerusalem (Neh. 7: 5), and of the manner in which he had carried out his resolution (Neh. 11: 1, 2), as a valuable document with respect to the history of the community, although the continuous thread of the narrative was broken by the interpolation. From his admission of this list, we may infer that he also incorporated other not less important documents, such as the lists of the priests and Levites, 12: 1-26, in his book, without troubling himself about the continuous progress of the historical narrative, because it was his purpose not merely to portray his own labours in Jerusalem, but to describe the development and circumstances of the reinstated community under his own and Ezra’s leadership. ^B

This being the case, there can be no reason whatever for denying Nehemiah’s authorship of the account of the religious solemnities in chs. 8-10, especially as the communicative form in which the narrative is written, bears witness that one of the leaders of that assembly of the people composed this account of it, and

the expression, “we will not forsake the house of our God,” with which it closes (Neh. 10:40), is a form of speech peculiar to Nehemiah, and repeated by him Neh. 13:11. Such considerations seem to us to do away with any doubts which may have been raised as to the integrity of the whole book, and the authorship of Nehemiah.

For the exegetical literature, see my *Lehrb.* p. 460. Comp. also Ed. Barde, *Néhémie étude critique et exegetique*, Tübing. 1861, and Bertheau’s *Commentary* already quoted, p. 18.

EXPOSITION

I. Nehemiah’s Journey to Jerusalem, and the Restoration of the Walls of Jerusalem. — Ch. 1-6.

Nehemiah, cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes, is plunged into deep affliction by the account which he receives from certain individuals from Judah of the sad condition of his countrymen who had returned to Jerusalem and Judah. He prays with fasting to the Lord for mercy (Neh. 1), and on a favourable opportunity entreats the king and queen for permission to make a journey to Jerusalem, and for the necessary authority to repair its ruined walls. His request being granted, he travels as governor to Jerusalem, provided with letters from the king, and escorted by captains of the army and horsemen (Neh. 2: 1-10). Soon after his arrival, he surveys the condition of the walls and gates, summons the rulers of the people and the priests to set about building the wall, and in spite of the obstacles he encounters from the enemies of the Jews, accomplishes this work (Neh. 2:11-6:19). In describing the manner in which the building of the walls was carried on, he first enumerates in succession (Neh. 3: 1-32) the individuals and companies engaged in restoring the walls surrounding the city (Neh. 3: 1-32), and then relates the obstacles and difficulties encountered (Neh. 3:33-6:19).

Ch. 1. — Nehemiah’s Interest in and Prayer for Jerusalem.

Neh. 1: 1-4. In the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, being then at Susa, received from one of his brethren, and other individuals from Judah, information which deeply grieved him, concerning the sad condition of the captive who had returned to the land of their fathers, and the state of Jerusalem. V. 1a contains the title of the whole book: the History of Nehemiah (see p. 89). By the addition “son of Hachaliah,” Nehemiah is distinguished from others of the same name (e.g., from Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, 3:16). Another Nehemiah, too, returned from captivity with Zerubbabel, *Ezr. 2: 2.* Of Hachaliah we know nothing further, his name occurring but once more,

Neh. 10: 2, in conjunction, as here, with that of Nehemiah. Eusebius and Jerome assert that Nehemiah was of the tribe of Judah, — a statement which may be correct, but is unsupported by any evidence from the Old Testament. According to v. 11, he was cup-bearer to the Persian king, and was, at his own request, appointed for some time Pecha, i.e., governor, of Judah. Comp. Neh. 5:14, 12:26, and 8: 9, 10: 2. “In the month Chisleu of the twentieth year I was in the citadel of Susa” — such is the manner in which Nehemiah commences the narrative of his labours for Jerusalem. Chisleu is the ninth month of the year, answering to our December. Comp. Zec. 7: 1, 1 Macc. 4:52. The twentieth year is, according to Neh. 2: 1, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. On the citadel of Susa, see further details in the remarks on Dan. 8: 2. Susa was the capital of the province Susiana, and its citadel, called by the Greeks Memnoneion, was strongly fortified. The kings of Persia were accustomed to reside here during some months of the year.

Neh. 1: 2. There came to Nehemiah Hanani, one of his brethren, and certain men from Judah. **אֶחָד מֵאֶחָי**, one of my brethren, might mean merely a relation of Nehemiah, **אֶחָי** being often used of more distant relations; but since Nehemiah calls Hanani **אָחִי** in Neh. 7:10, it is evident that his own brother is meant. “And I asked them concerning the Jews, and concerning Jerusalem.” **הַיְהוּדִים** is further defined by **הַפְּלִיטָה וְגו'**, who had escaped, who were left from the captivity; those who had returned to Judah are intended, as contrasted with those who still remained in heathen lands. In the answer, v. 3, they are more precisely designated as being “there in the province (of Judah).” With respect to **הַמְדִינָה**, see remarks on Ezr. 2: 1. They are said to be “in great affliction (**רָעָה**) and in reproach.” Their affliction is more nearly defined by the accessory clause which follows: and the wall = because the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates burned with fire. **מִפְּרֻצָּה**, Pual (the intensive form), broken down, does not necessarily mean that the whole wall was destroyed, but only portions, as appears from the subsequent description of the building of the wall, Neh. 3.

Neh. 1: 4. This description of the state of the returned captives plunged Nehemiah into such deep affliction, that he passed some days in mourning, fasting, and prayer. Opinions are divided with respect to the historical relation of the facts mentioned v. 3. Some older expositors thought that Hanani could not have spoken of the destruction of the walls and gates of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, because this was already sufficiently known to Nehemiah, but of some recent demolition on the part of Samaritans and other hostile neighbours of the Jews; in opposition to which, Rambach simply replies that we are told nothing of a restoration of the wall of Jerusalem by Zerubbabel and Ezra. More

recently Ewald (*Geschichte*, iv. p. 137f.) has endeavoured to show, from certain psalms which he transposes to post-Babylonian times, the probability of a destruction of the rebuilt wall, but gives a decided negative to the question, whether this took place during the thirteen years between the arrivals of Ezra and Nehemiah (p. 107). "For," says he, "there is not in the whole of Nehemiah's record the most distant hint that the walls had been destroyed only a short time since; but, on the contrary, this destruction was already so remote an event, that its occasion and authors were no longer spoken of." Vaihinger (*Theol. Stud. und Krit.*, 1857, p. 88, comp. 1854, p. 124f.) and Bertheau are of opinion that it indisputably follows from Neh. 1: 3, 4, as appearances show, that the walls of Jerusalem were actually rebuilt and the gates set up before the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, and that the destruction of this laborious work, which occasioned the sending of an embassy to the Persian court, was of quite recent occurrence, since otherwise Nehemiah would not have been so painfully affected by it. But even the very opposite opinion held concerning the impression made upon the reader by these verses, shows that appearances are deceitful, and the view that the destruction of the walls and gates was of quite recent occurrence is not implied by the words themselves, but only inserted in them by expositors. There is no kind of historical evidence that the walls of Jerusalem which had been destroyed by the Chaldeans were once more rebuilt before Nehemiah's arrival.

The documents given by Ezr. 4: 8-22, which are in this instance appealed to, so far from proving the fact, rather bear testimony against it. The counsellor Rehum and the scribe Shimshai, in their letter to Artaxerxes, accuse indeed the Jews of building a rebellious and bad city, of restoring its walls and digging its foundations (Ezr. 4:12); but they only give the king to understand that if this city be built and its walls restored, the king will no longer have a portion on this side the river (v. 16), and hasten to Jerusalem, as soon as they receive the king's decision, to hinder the Jews by force and power (v. 23). Now, even if this accusation were quite well founded, nothing further can be inferred from it than that the Jews had begun to restore the walls, but were hindered in the midst of their undertaking. Nothing is said in these documents either of a rebuilding, i.e., a complete restoration, of the walls and setting up of the gates, or of breaking down the walls and burning the gates. It cannot be said that to build a wall means the same as pulling down a wall already built. Nor is anything said in vv. 3 and 4 of a recent demolition. The assertion, too, that the destruction of this laborious work was the occasion of the mission of Hanani and certain men of Judah to the Persian court (Vaihinger), is entirely without scriptural support. In vv. 2 and 3 it is merely said that Hanani and his companions came from Judah to Nehemiah, and that Nehemiah questioned them concerning the condition of the Jews in the province of Judah, and concerning Jerusalem, and that they answered: The Jews there are in great affliction and reproach, for the wall of

Jerusalem is broken down (מִפְרָצָה) is a participle expressing the state, not the praeter. or perfect, which would be found here if a destruction recently effected were spoken of). Nehemiah, too, in Neh. 2: 3 and 17, only says: The city of my fathers' sepulchres (Jerusalem) lieth desolate (הִרְבָּה) is an adjective), not: has been desolated. Nor can a visit on the part of Jews from Judah to their compatriot and relative, the king's cup-bearer, be called a mission to the Persian court. — With respect also to the deep affliction of Nehemiah, upon which Bertheau lays so much stress, it by no means proves that he had received a terrible account of some fresh calamity which had but just befallen the community at Jerusalem, and whose whole extent was as yet unknown to him. Nehemiah had not as yet been to Jerusalem, and could not from his own experience know the state of affairs in Judah and Jerusalem; hence he questioned the newly arrived visitors, not concerning the latest occurrences, but as to the general condition of the returned captives. The fact of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldees could not, of course, be unknown to him; but neither could he be ignorant that now ninety years since a great number of captives had returned to their homes with Zerubbabel and settled in Judah and Jerusalem, and that seventy years since the temple at Jerusalem had been rebuilt. Judging from these facts, he might not have imagined that the state of affairs in Judah and Jerusalem was so bad as it really was. When, then, he now learnt that those who had returned to Judah were in great affliction, that the walls of the town were still lying in ruins and its gates burned, and that it was therefore exposed defenceless to all the insults of hostile neighbours, even this information might well grieve him. It is also probable that it was through Hanani and his companions that he first learnt of the inimical epistle of the royal officials Rehum and Shimshai to Artaxerxes, and of the answer sent thereto by that monarch and thus became for the first time aware of the magnitude of his fellow-countrymen's difficulties. Such intelligence might well be such a shock to him as to cause the amount of distress described v. 4. For even if he indulged the hope that the king might repeal the decree by which the rebuilding of the wall had been prohibited till further orders, he could not but perceive how difficult it would be effectually to remedy the grievous state in which his countrymen who had returned to the land of their fathers found themselves, while the disposition of their neighbours towards them was thus hostile. This state was indeed sufficiently distressing to cause deep pain to one who had a heart alive to the welfare of his nation, and there is no need for inventing new "calamities," of which history knows nothing, to account for the sorrow of Nehemiah. Finally, the circumstance that the destruction of the walls and burning of the gates are alone mentioned as proofs of the affliction and reproach which the returned exiles were suffering, arises simply from an

intention to hint at the remedy about to be described in the narrative which follows, by bringing this special kind of reproach prominently forward.

Neh. 1: 5-11. Nehemiah's prayer, as given in these verses, comprises the prayers which he prayed day and night, during the period of his mourning and fasting (v. 4 comp. v. 6), to his faithful and covenant God, to obtain mercy for his people, and the divine blessing upon his project for their assistance.

Neh. 1: 5. The invocation of Jahve as: Thou God of heaven, alludes to God's almighty government of the world, and the further predicates of God, to His covenant faithfulness. "Thou great and terrible God" recalls Deu. 7:21, and "who keepest covenant and mercy," etc., Deu. 7: 9 and Exo. 20: 5, 6.

Neh. 1: 6. "Let Thine ear be attentive, and Thine eyes open," like 2Ch. 6:40, 7:15 — לְשָׁמַעַ, that Thou mayest hearken to the prayer of Thy servant, which I pray, and how I confess concerning... מִתְנַדֵּד still depends upon אֲשֶׁר in the sense of: and what I confess concerning the sins. הַיּוֹם does not here mean to-day, but now, at this time, as the addition "day and night" compared with יָמִים in v. 4 shows. To strengthen the communicative form הִתְאַנְנוּ לָךְ, and to acknowledge before God how deeply penetrated he was by the feeling of his own sin and guilt, he adds: and I and my father's house have sinned.

Neh. 1: 7. We have dealt very corruptly against Thee. חָבַל is the inf. constr. instead of the infin. abs., which, before the finite verb, and by reason of its close connection therewith, becomes the infin. constr., like הָיִיתָ אֲהִיָּהּ, Psa. 50:21; comp. Ewald, § 240, c. The dealing corruptly against God consists in not having kept the commandments, statutes, and judgments of the law.

Neh. 1: 8, 9. With his confession of grievous transgression, Nehemiah combines the petition that the Lord would be mindful of His word declared by Moses, that if His people, whom He had scattered among the heathen for their sins, should turn to Him and keep His commandments, He would gather them from all places where He had scattered them, and bring them back to the place which He had chosen to place His name there. This word (הַדְּבָר) he designates, as that which God had commanded to His servant Moses, inasmuch as it formed a part of that covenant law which was prescribed to the Israelites as their rule of life. The matter of this word is introduced by לְאָמַר: ye transgress, I will scatter; i.e., if ye transgress by revolting from me, I will scatter you among the nations, — and ye turn to me and keep my commandments (i.e., if ye turn to me and...), if there were of you cast out to the end of heaven (i.e., to the most distant regions where the end of heaven touches the earth), thence will I gather you, etc. נָדַח, pat. Niph'al, with a collective meaning, cast-out

ones, like Deu. 30: 4. These words are no verbal quotation, but a free summary, in which Nehemiah had Deu. 30: 1-5 chiefly in view, of what God had proclaimed in the law of Moses concerning the dispersion of His people among the heathen if they sinned against Him, and of their return to the land of their fathers if they repented and turned to Him. The clause: if the cast-out ones were at the end of heaven, etc., stands verbally in v. 4. The last words, v. 9, "(I will bring them) to the place which I have chosen, that my name may dwell there," are a special application of the general promise of the law to the present case. Jerusalem is meant, where the Lord caused His name to dwell in the temple; comp. Deu. 12:11. The entreaty to remember this word and to fulfil it, seems ill adapted to existing circumstances, for a portion of the people were already brought back to Jerusalem; and Nehemiah's immediate purpose was to pray, not for the return of those still sojourning among the heathen, but for the removal of the affliction and reproach resting on those who were now at Jerusalem. Still less appropriate seems the citation of the words: If ye transgress, I will scatter you among the nations. It must, however, be remembered that Nehemiah is not so much invoking the divine compassion as the righteousness and faithfulness of a covenant God, the great and terrible God that keepeth covenant and mercy (v. 5). Now this, God had shown Himself to be, by fulfilling the threats of His law that He would scatter His faithless and transgressing people among the nations. Thus His fulfilment of this one side of the covenant strengthened the hope that God would also keep His other covenant word to His people who turned to Him, viz., that He would bring them again to the land of their fathers, to the place of His gracious presence. Hence the reference to the dispersion of the nation among the heathen, forms the actual substructure for the request that so much of the promise as yet remained unfulfilled might come to pass. Nehemiah, moreover, views this promise in the full depth of its import, as securing to Israel not merely an external return to their native land, but their restoration as a community, in the midst of whom the Lord had His dwelling, and manifested Himself as the defence and refuge of His people. To the re-establishment of this covenant relation very much was still wanting. Those who had returned from captivity had indeed settled in the land of their fathers; and the temple in which they might worship God with sacrifices, according to the law, was rebuilt at Jerusalem. But notwithstanding all this, Jerusalem, with its ruined walls and burned gates, was still like a city lying waste, and exposed to attacks of all kinds; while the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah were loaded with shame and contempt by their heathen neighbours. In this sense, Jerusalem was not yet restored, and the community dwelling therein not yet brought to the place where the name of the Lord dwelt. In this respect, the promise that Jahve would again manifest Himself to His repentant people as the God of the covenant was still unfulfilled, and the petition that He would gather His people

to the place which He had chosen to put His name there, i.e., to manifest Himself according to His nature, as testified in His covenant (Exo. 34: 6, 7), quite justifiable. In v. 10 Nehemiah supports his petition by the words: And these (now dwelling in Judah and Jerusalem) are Thy servants and Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed, etc. His servants who worship Him in His temple, His people whom He has redeemed from Egypt by His great power and by His strong arm, God cannot leave in affliction and reproach. The words: “redeemed with great power”...are reminiscences from Deu. 7: 8, 9:26, 29, and other passages in the Pentateuch, and refer to the deliverance from Egypt.

Neh. 1:11. The prayer closes with the reiterated entreaty that God would hearken to the prayer of His servant (i.e., Nehemiah), and to the prayer of His servants who delight to fear His name (יִרְאֵהוּ, infin. like Deu. 4:10 and elsewhere), i.e., of all Israelites who, like Nehemiah, prayed to God to redeem Israel from all his troubles. For himself in particular, Nehemiah also request: “Prosper Thy servant to-day (הַיּוֹם like v. 6; לְעִבְדֶּךָ may be either the accusative of the person, like 2Ch. 26: 5, or the dative: Prosper his design unto Thy servant, like 2:20), and give him to mercy (i.e., cause him to find mercy; comp. 1Ki. 8:50; Psa. 106:46) before the face of this man.” What man he means is explained by the following supplementary remark, “And I was cup-bearer to the king,” without whose favour and permission Nehemiah could not have carried his project into execution (as related in Neh. 2).

Ch. 2. — Nehemiah Journeys to Jerusalem with the King’s Permission, and Furnished with Royal Letters. He Makes a Survey of the Walls, and Resolves to Undertake the Work of Building Them.

Neh. 2. Three months after receiving the tidings concerning Jerusalem, Nehemiah perceived a favourable opportunity of making request to the king for leave to undertake a journey to the city of his fathers for the purpose of building it, and obtained the permission he entreated, together with letters to the governors on this side the Euphrates to permit him to pass through their provinces, and to the keeper of the royal forests to supply wood for building the walls and gates, and an escort of captains of the army and horsemen for his protection (vv. 1-9), to the great vexation of Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite (v. 10). In the third night after his arrival at Jerusalem, Nehemiah rode round the city to survey the walls, and incited the rulers of the people and the priests to undertake the work of rebuilding them (vv. 11-18). Sanballat and other enemies of the Jews expressed their contempt thereat, but Nehemiah encountered their ridicule with serious words (vv. 19, 20).

Neh. 2: 1-3. In the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, Nehemiah as cupbearer took the wine and handed it to the king. Nisan is, according to the Hebrew calendar, the first month of the year; yet here, as in Neh. 1, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes is named, and the month Chisleu there mentioned (v. 1), which, after the Hebrew method of computing the year, was the ninth month and preceded Nisan by three months, is placed in the same year. This can only be explained on the grounds that either the twentieth year of Artaxerxes did not coincide with the year of the calendar, but began later, or that Nehemiah here uses the computation of time current in anterior Asia, and also among the Jews after the captivity in civil matters, and which made the new year begin in autumn. Of these two views we esteem the latter to be correct, since it cannot be shown that the years of the king's reign would be reckoned from the day of his accession. In chronological statements they were reckoned according to the years of the calendar, so that the commencement of a year of a reign coincided with that of the civil year. If, moreover, the beginning of the year is placed in autumn, Tishri is the first, Chisleu the third, and Nisan the seventh month. The circumstances which induced Nehemiah not to apply to the king till three months after his reception of the tidings which so distressed him, are not stated. It is probable that he himself required some time for deliberation before he could come to a decision as to the best means of remedying the distresses of Jerusalem; then, too, he may not have ventured at once to bring his request before the king from fear of meeting with a refusal, and may therefore have waited till an opportunity favourable to his desires should present itself. **וַיִּין לְפָנָיו**, "wine was before the king," is a circumstantial clause explanatory of what follows. The words allude to some banquet at which the king and queen were present. The last sentence, "And I have not been sad before him" (**רַע** according to **פְּנֵיךָ רָעִים** of v. 2, of a sad countenance), can neither mean, I had never before been sad before him (de Wette); nor, I was accustomed not to be sad before him; but, I had not been sad before him at the moment of presenting the cup to him (Bertheau), because it would not have been becoming to serve the king with a sad demeanour: comp. Est. 4: 2. The king, however, noticed his sadness, and inquired: "Why is thy countenance sad, since thou art not sick? this is nothing but sorrow of heart, i.e., thy sadness of countenance can arise only from sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid;" because the unexpected question obliged him to explain the cause of his sorrow, and he could not tell how the king would view the matter, nor whether he would favour his ardent desire to assist his fellow-countrymen in Judah.

Neh. 2: 3. He nevertheless openly expressed his desire, prefacing it by the accustomed form of wishing the king prosperity, saying: "Let the king live for ever;" comp. Dan. 2: 4, 3: 9. "Why should not my countenance be sad? for the

city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and its gates are burned with fire." The question, Why...? means: I have certainly sufficient reason for sadness. The reason is, that (אָשֶׁר) the city where are the graves of my fathers lieth waste.

Neh. 2: 4-10. Then the king, feeling interested, asked him: For what dost thou make request? בִּקְשׁ עַל, to make request for or concerning a thing, like Ezzr. 8:23, Est. 4: 8, 7: 7. The question shows that the king was inclined to relieve the distress of Jerusalem which had been just stated to him. "And so I prayed to the God of heaven," to ensure divine assistance in the request he was about to lay before the king. Then Nehemiah answered (v. 5), "If it please the king, and if thy servant is well-pleasing before thee, (I beg) that thou wouldest send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it." יִטֵּב לְפָנַי, here and Est. 5:14, is of like meaning with יִטֵּב בְּעֵינַי or טוֹב, Est. 8: 5, 2Sa. 18: 4: if thy servant is right in thine eyes, i.e., if he thinks rightly concerning the matter in question. The matter of his request is directly combined with this conditional clause by אָשֶׁר, the connecting term, I beg, being easily supplied from the king's question: For what dost thou beg?

Neh. 2: 6. The king and the queen, who was sitting near him (שָׁגַל, Psa. 45:10), grant him permission to depart after he has, in answer to their inquiry, fixed the period of his absence. Nehemiah makes the result of the conversation, "And it pleased the king," etc., follow immediately upon the question of the king and queen: For how long shall thy journey be, and when wilt thou return? before telling us what was his answer to this question, which is not brought in till afterwards, so that וְאֶתְּנָה לוֹ זְמַן must be understood as expressing: since I had determined the time.

Neh. 2: 7, 8. Hereupon Nehemiah also requested from the king letters to the governors beyond (west of) the river (Euphrates), to allow him to travel unmolested through their provinces to Judah (יָתְנוּ לִי, let them give me = let there be given me; הֵעֵבִיר, to pass or travel through a country, comp. Deu. 3:20); and a letter to Asaph, the keeper (inspector) of the royal forests, to give him timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple, and for the walls of the city, and for the governor's own house. These requests were also granted. פְּרָדִים in Son. 4:13, Ecc. 2: 5, signifies a park or orchard; it is a word of Aryan origin (in Armenian pardez, the garden round the house, in Greek παράδεισος), and is explained either from the Sanscrit *parta-dêça*, a superior district, or (by Haug) from the Zend. *pairi-daêza*, a fenced-in place. In Old-Persian it probably denoted the king's pleasure-grounds, and in our verse a royal wood or forest. Of the situation of this park nothing reliable can be

ascertained. As wood for extensive buildings was to be taken from it, the sycamore forest in the low plains, which had been the property of King David (1Ch. 27:28), and became, after the overthrow of the Davidic dynasty, first a Babylonian, and then a Persian possession, may be intended. ^{f4}

לְקָרוֹת, to timber, to overlay, to cover with beams (comp. 2Ch. 34:11) the gates of the citadel which belongs to the house, i.e., to the temple. This citadel — בִּירָה, in Greek Βάρις — by the temple is mentioned here for the first time; for in 1Ch. 29: 1, 19, the whole temple is called בִּירָה. It was certainly situate on the same place where Hyrcanus I, son of Simon Maccabaeus, or the kings of the Asmonean race, built the ἀκρόπολις and called it Baris (Jos. *Ant.* xv. 11. 4, comp. with xviii. 4. 3). This was subsequently rebuilt by Herod when he repaired and enlarged the temple, and named Antonia, in honour of his friend Mark Antony. It was a citadel of considerable size, provided with corner towers, walls, chambers, and spacious courts, built on a north-western side of the external chambers of the temple, for the defence of that edifice, and did not extend the entire length of the north side of the present *Haram*, as Robinson (see *Biblical Researches*, p. 300) seeks to show; comp., on the other hand, Tobler, *Topographic von Jerusalem*, i. p. 688f., and Rosen, *Haram von Jerusalem*, p. 25f. וְלְהוֹמָת is coordinate with לְקָרוֹת: “and for the walls of the city;” the timber not being used for building the wall itself, but for the gates (Neh. 3: 3, 6). “And for the house into which I come (to dwell).” This must be Nehemiah’s official residence as Pecha. For though it is not expressly stated in the present chapter that Nehemiah was appointed Pecha (governor) by Artaxerxes, yet Nehemiah himself tells us, Neh. 5:14, that he had been Pecha from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. Former governors had perhaps no official residence becoming their position. By לְבֵית the temple cannot, as older expositors thought, be intended. This request also was granted by the king, “according to the good hand of my God upon me;” comp. rem. on Ezr. 7: 6.

Neh. 2: 9. Nehemiah delivered the letter when he came to the governors on this side Euphrates. The king had also sent with him captains of the army and horsemen. The second half of v. 9 contains a supplementary remark, so that וַיִּשְׁלַח must be expressed by the pluperfect. Ezra had been ashamed to request a military escort from the Persian monarch (Ezr. 8:22); but the king gave to the high dignitary called Pecha a guard of soldiers, who certainly remained with him in Jerusalem also for his protection (Neh. 4:17). Besides these, there were in his retinue his brethren, i.e., either relations or fellow-countrymen, and servants, comp. Neh. 4:10, 5:10. That this retinue is not mentioned in the present verses, is owing to the fact that the journey itself is not further described, but only indirectly alluded to.

Neh. 2:10. When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite heard of his coming, it caused them great annoyance (**יָרַע לָהֶם** is strengthened by **רָעָה גְדוֹלָה**, as in Jonah 4: 1) that a man (as Nehemiah expresses himself ironically from their point of view) was come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. Sanballat is called the Horonite either after his birthplace or place of residence, yet certainly not from Horonaim in Moab, as older expositors imagined (Isa. 15: 5; Jer. 48:34), since he would then have been called a Moabite, but from either the upper or nether Beth-horon, formerly belonging to the tribe of Ephraim (Jos. 16: 3, 5, 18:13), and therefore in the time of Nehemiah certainly appertaining to the region of the Samaritans (Berth.). Tobiah the Ammonite is called **הַעֲבָד**, the servant, probably as being a servant or official of the Persian king. These two individuals were undoubtedly influential chiefs of the neighbouring hostile nations of Samaritans and Ammonites, and sought by alliances with Jewish nobles (Neh. 6:17, 13: 4, 28) to frustrate, whether by force or stratagem, the efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah for the internal and external security of Judah. Nehemiah mentions thus early their annoyance at his arrival, by way of hinting beforehand at their subsequent machinations to delay the fortifying of Jerusalem.

Neh. 2:11-18. NEHEMIAH'S ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM. HE SURVEYS THE WALL, AND RESOLVES TO RESTORE IT. — V. 11. Having arrived at Jerusalem and rested three days (as Ezra had also done, Ezr. 8:32), he arose in the night, and some few men with him, to ride round the wall of the city, and get a notion of its condition. His reason for taking but few men with him is given in the following sentence: "I had told no man what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem." Although he had come to Jerusalem with the resolution of fortifying the city by restoring its circumvallation, he spoke of this to no one until he had ascertained, by an inspection of the wall, the magnitude and extent of the work to be accomplished. For, being aware of the hostility of Sanballat and Tobiah, he desired to keep his intention secret until he felt certain of the possibility of carrying it into execution. Hence he made his survey of the wall by night, and took but few men with him, and those on foot, for the sake of not exciting attention. The beast on which he rode was either a horse or a mule.

Neh. 2:13. "And I went out by night by the valley-gate, and towards the dragon-well, and to the dung-gate." **אֶל-פְּנֵי**, in the direction towards. The dragon-well only occurs here by this name. Judging from its position between the valley-gate and the dung-gate, it is either identical with the well of Gihon (Robinson, *Palestine*, ii. p. 166), whose waters supply the upper and lower pools in the valley of Gihon, the present *Birket el Mamilla* and *Birket es Sultan*, or situate in its immediate neighbourhood. The valley-gate is the modern gate of

the city leading to the valley of Gihon, and situated at or near the present Jaffa gate; see rem. on 3:13. The dung-gate (שַׁעַר הַאֲשָׁפֹת), which in 3:13 also is placed next the valley-gate, and was a thousand cubits distant therefrom, must be sought for on the south-western side of Zion, where a road, to the south of *Nebi Dâûd* and the Zion gate, now descends into the valley of Hinnom, towards *Sûr Baher*. "And I viewed the walls of Jerusalem which lay broken down, and its gates which were consumed by fire." The word שָׁבַר, which the LXX read, "I was breaking down," gives no tolerable sense; for it cannot mean, I broke through the walls, or, I made a path through the ruins. Many MSS, however, and several editions, offer שָׁבַר; and R. Norzi informs us that D. Kimchi and Aben Ezra read שָׁבַר. שָׁבַר, of which only the Piel occurs in Hebrew, answers to the Aramaean סָבַר, to look to something; and to the Arabic *sbr*, to investigate; and סָבַר means to look on, to consider, to direct the eyes and thoughts to some object. In the open מ of הַמַּחְצֵיט Hiller conjectures that there is a trace of another reading, perhaps מִפְּרָצִים; comp. Neh. 1: 3.

Neh. 2:14. "And I went on to the fountain-gate, and to the king's pool, and there was no room for the beast to come through under me." The very name of the fountain- or well-gate points to the foundation of Siloah (see rem. on 3:15); hence it lay on the eastern declivity of Zion, but not in the district or neighbourhood of the present *Bâb el Mogharibeh*, in which tradition finds the ancient dung-gate, but much farther south, in the neighbourhood of the pool of Siloah; see rem. on Neh. 3:15. The King's pool is probably the same which Josephus (*bell. Jud.* v. 4. 2) calls Σολομῶνος κολυμβήθρα, and places east of the spring of Siloah, and which is supposed by Robinson (*Palestine*, ii. pp. 149, 159) and Thenius (*das vorexil. Jerus.*, appendix to a commentary on the books of the Kings, p. 20) to be the present Fountain of the Virgin. Bertheau, however, on the other hand, rightly objects that the Fountain of the Virgin lying deep in the rock, and now reached by a descent of thirty steps, could not properly be designated a pool. He tries rather to identify the King's pool with the outlet of a canal investigated by Tobler (*Topogr.* i. p. 91f.), which the latter regards as a conduit for rain-water, fluid impurities, or even the blood of sacrificed animals; but Bertheau as an aqueduct which, perhaps at the place where its entrance is now found, once filled a pool, of which, indeed, no trace has as yet been discovered. But apart from the difficulty of calling the outlet of a canal a pool (Arnold in Herzog's *Realencycl.* xviii. p. 656), the circumstance, that Tobler could find in neither of the above-described canals any trace of high antiquity, tells against this conjecture. Much more may be said in favour of the view of E. G. Schultz (*Jerusalem*, p. 58f.), that the half-choked-up pool near Ain Silwan may be the King's pool and Solomon's pool; for travellers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries mention a *piscina grandis foras* and

natoria Siloë at the mouth of the fountain of Siloah (comp. Leyrer in Herzog's *Realencycl.* xvi. p. 372). See also rem. on 3:15. Here there was no room for the beast to get through, the road being choked up with the ruins of the walls that had been destroyed, so that Nehemiah was obliged to dismount.

Neh. 2:15. Then I (went on) ascending the valley and viewing the wall, and so entered by the valley-gate, and returned. נִשְׂתַּדֵּן with the participle expresses the continuance of an action, and hence in this place the continuous ascent of the valley and survey of the wall. The נַחַל which he ascended was doubtless the valley of Kidron (נַחַל קִדְרוֹן, 2Sa. 20:23, 1Ki. 2:37, and elsewhere). נִשְׂבָּאוּ וְנִשְׂבוּ are connected, שׁוּב expressing merely the idea of repetition (Gesenius, *heb. Gram.* § 142, 3): I came again into the valley-gate. Older expositors incorrectly explain these words to mean, I turned round, traversing again the road by which I had come; Bertheau: I turned to go farther in a westerly direction, and after making the circuit of the entire city, I re-entered by the valley-gate. This sense is correct as to fact, but inadmissible, as requiring too much to complete it. If we take שׁוּב adverbially, these completions are unnecessary. Nehemiah does not give the particulars of the latter portion of his circuit, but merely tells us that after having ascended the valley of Kidron, he re-entered by the valley-gate, and returned to his residence, obviously assuming, that from the upper part of the vale of Kidron he could only return to the valley-gate at the west by passing along the northern part of the wall.

Neh. 2:16-18. He had spoken to no one of his purpose (v. 12); hence the rulers of the city knew neither whither he was going nor what he was doing (i.e., undertaking) when he rode by night out of the city gate accompanied by a few followers. As yet he had said nothing either to the Jews (the citizens of Jerusalem), the priests, the nobles, the rulers, or the rest who did the work. הַחֲרִים and הַסִּגְנִים are connected, as in Ezer. 9: 2 הַשָּׂרִים and הַסִּגְנִים. The nobles (חֲרִים, *nobiles*) or princes are the heads of the different houses or races of the people; סִגְנִים, the rulers of the town, the authorities. עֹשֵׂה הַמְּלָאכָה, the doers of the work, are the builders; comp. Ezer. 3: 9. When these are, in comparison with the priests, nobles, and rulers, designated as יְתֵר, the remnant, this is explained by the fact that the priests and rulers of the people were not actively engaged in building. הַמְּלָאכָה, the work in question, i.e., here the building of the walls. עַד כֵּן, until thus, i.e., until now, until the time apparent from the context. Nehemiah then, having inspected the condition of the ruined walls, and being now persuaded of the possibility of restoring them, made known his resolution to the nobles, the rulers, and the community, i.e., to a public assembly called together for this purpose (v. 17). “Ye see (have before

your eyes, know from experience) the distress that we are in, that Jerusalem lieth waste: come (לָבוֹ), let us build up the walls of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.” In other words: Let us by building our walls put an end to the miserable condition which gives our adversaries occasion to reproach us.

Neh. 2:18. To gain the favourable regard of the assembly for his design, he informs them how God had so far prospered his undertaking: I told them of the hand of my God, that it = that the hand my God had graciously provided for me, i.e., that God had so graciously arranged my journey to Jerusalem; and the king’s words that he had spoken to me, sc. with respect to the building of the wall, of which we are told *Neh. 2: 8* only thus much, that the king gave orders to the keeper of the royal forest to give him wood for building. Encouraged by this information, the assembly exclaimed, “Let us arise and build;” and “they strengthened their hands for good,” i.e., they vigorously set about the good work.

Neh. 2:19, 20. When the adversaries of the Jews heard this, they derided their resolution. Beside Sanballat and Tobiah (comp. v. 10), Geshem the Arabian is also named as an adversary: so, too, *Neh. 6: 1, 2, and 6*, where Gashmu, the fuller pronunciation of his name, occurs. He was probably the chief of some Arab race dwelling in South Palestine, not far from Jerusalem (comp. the Arabians, *Neh. 4: 1*). These enemies ironically exclaimed: What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? The irony lies in the fact that they did not give the Jews credit for power to build fortifications, so as to be able to rebel. Comp. *Neh. 6: 6*, where Sanballat, in an open letter to Nehemiah, again reproaches them with rebellion.

Neh. 2:20. Nehemiah replied with impressive gravity: “The God of heaven, He will prosper us, and we His servants will arise and build; but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem.” זָכָרָהּ like 2Sa. 19:29. זָכָרוֹן, memorial; only members of the congregation, who may hope to live in their descendants in Jerusalem, can be said to have a memorial there.

Chs. 3 and 4. — The Building of the Walls and Gates of Jerusalem.

Neh. 3-4. In these two chapters is described the building of the walls and gates of Jerusalem: the individuals and families who performed the work, and the portion of wall and the gates on which different families were respectively employed, being specified in *Neh. 3: 1-32*; while the attempts of Sanballat and his associates to obstruct the building and the defensive measures resorted to by Nehemiah follow, *3:33-4:17*.

Neh. 3: 1-32. The enumeration of the builders, and of the gates and portions of wall built, begins with the sheep-gate and the portion of the wall adjoining it, built by the priests (1 and 2), and concludes with the goldsmiths and merchants who built up to the sheep-gate (v. 32). Throughout it is almost constantly said of the several parties of builders that they built **עַל יְדוֹ**, by the side of, next to, the party previously named. Hence we are justified in inferring that the course of the wall is adhered to in this statement, and that the gates are mentioned in the actual order in which they were found in the walls.^{f5}

Neh. 3: 1, 2. The narrative of the building is connected with what precedes by **וַיִּקְרָא**, which alludes to the carrying out of the resolve, **וַיִּקְרָא**, Neh. 2:18. The enumeration begins with Eliashib the high priest and his brethren, i.e., the ordinary priests. These built the sheep-gate, rightly sought by modern topographers in the eastern wall north of Haram, the site of the ancient temple, i.e., in the position or neighbourhood of the present St. Stephen's gate, through which the Bedouins to this day drive sheep into the town for sale (Tobler, *Topogr.* i. p. 149). "Although," as Bertheau remarks, "we are not generally justified, after the lapse of so many centuries, during which great changes have been made in the positions of the gates and walls, and in face of the fact that the present walls and gates were not erected till the years 1536, 1537, and 1539, in determining the direction and extent of the walls between the several gates, and the locality of the gates in this description, by the direction and extent of the wall and the locality of the gates in modern Jerusalem (Tobl. *Topogr. Dritte Wanderung*, p. 265), yet in the present instance valid arguments exist in favour of this view. The very neighbourhood of the temple and the nature of the soil bear witness that from ancient times a gate was placed here which took its name from the circumstance that sheep were driven in by it, whether for sale in the market or for sacrificial purposes."^{f6}

They sanctified it and set up its doors: and to the tower Hammeah they sanctified it unto the tower Hananeel. **וַיִּקְדָּשׁ**, to sanctify, to dedicate (comp. 1Ki. 8:64), can here only mean that the priests dedicated that portion of building on which they were engaged, as soon as they had finished it, for the purpose of sanctifying the whole work by this preliminary consecration; the solemn dedication of the whole wall not taking place till afterwards, and being related Neh. 12:27f. The setting up of the doors in the gates did not, according to Neh. 6: 1, take place till after all the breaches in the wall had been repaired, i.e., till the building of the wall was completed. It is, however, mentioned here, and in vv. 3, 6, etc., contemporaneously with the wall-building; because the builders of the several gates, undertaking also the construction and setting up of the doors, the intention is to give a summary of the work executed by the respective building parties. **וְעַד-מִנְדַּל הַמָּאָה** is still dependent on **וַיִּבְנוּ**, that is

to say, this verb must be mentally repeated before the words: they built to the tower Hammeah, they sanctified it (the suffix in **קִדְּשׁוּהוּ** can only relate to **מִגְדָּל**). **יָבְנוּ** must also be repeated before **עַד מִגְדָּל חֲנָנְאֵל**: and they built further, unto the tower Hananeel. The tower **הַמֵּאָה** (the hundred) is only mentioned here and Neh. 12:39, but the tower Hananeel is likewise spoken of Jer. 31:38 and Zec. 14:10. From these passages it appears that the two towers were so situated, that any one going from west to east along the north wall of the city, and thence southward, would first come to the tower Hananeel, and afterwards to the tower Hammeah, and that both were between the fish-gate and the sheep-gate. From the passages in Jeremiah and Zechariah especially, it is evident that the tower Hananeel stood at the north-east corner of the wall. Hence the statement in this verse, that the portion of wall built by the priests extended to the north-east corner of the wall; and the tower Hammeah must be sought between the sheep-gate and the north-east corner of the wall. Whence the names of these towers were derived is unknown.

Neh. 3: 2. Next to him built the men of Jericho (comp. Ezr. 2:24); and next to them built Zaccur the son of Imri. The suffix of the first **עַל יָדוֹ**, though in the singular number, refers to Eliashib and the priests (v. 1), and that of the second to the men of Jericho, while in vv. 4 and 9, on the contrary, a singular noun is followed by **עַל יָדָם**; both **עַל יָדוֹ** and **עַל יָדָם** expressing merely the notion beside, next to, and builders of the respective portions being at one time regarded as in a plural, at another in a singular sense (as a company). The portion built by the men of Jericho and Zaccur the son of Imri, the head of a family, not mentioned elsewhere, let between the tower Hananeel and the fish-gate in the north wall. When individuals are, like Zaccur, mentioned in the following description, e.g., vv. 4, 6, as builders or repairers of portions of wall, they are heads of houses who engaged in the work of building at the head of the fathers of families and individuals who were dependent on them.

Neh. 3: 3. The fish-gate did the sons of Senaah build (see rem. on Ezr. 2:35); they laid its beams, and set up its doors, bolts, and bars. The fish-gate probably received its name from the fish-market in its neighbourhood, to which the Syrians brought sea-fish (13, 16); it is also mentioned in Neh. 12:39, 2Ch. 33:14, and Zep. 1:10. It was not situated, as Thenius has represented it in his plan of Jerusalem, close to the corner tower of Hananeel, but somewhat to the west of it in the north wall; two lengths of wall being, according to v. 2, built between this tower and the gate in question. With respect to **קְרוּהוּ**, see rem. on Neh. 2: 8. Besides the doors for the gate, **מִנְעוּלָיו** and **בְּרִיחָיו** are mentioned, as also vv. 6, 13-15. Both words denote bars for closing doors. **בְּרִיחִים** are, to judge from the use of this word in the description of the

tabernacle (Exo. 26:26f. and elsewhere), longer bars, therefore cross-bars, used on the inner side of the door; and **מְנַעוּלִים** the brackets into which they were inserted.

Neh. 3: 4, 5. Next to these, Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Hakkoz, Meshullam the son of Berechiah, Zadok the son of Baana, and the Tekoites, repaired in the above order, each a portion of wall. **הַחֲזִיק**, to strengthen, means here to repair the gaps and holes in the wall; comp. Ezr. 27: 9, 27. Meremoth ben Urijah repaired, according to v. 21, another portion besides. Meshullam ben Berechiah was, according to Neh. 6:18, a person of consideration in Jerusalem. The men of Tekoa, who do not occur among those who returned with Zerubbabel (Ezr. 2), also repaired a second portion. “But their nobles brought not their neck to the service of their Lord.” The expression “to bring the neck to service” is, according to Jer. 27:11, to be understood as meaning: to bring the neck under the yoke of any one, i.e., to subject oneself to the service of another. **צָנָרָם** stands for **צָנָאָרָם**. It is questionable whether **אֲדִנְיָהִם** is to be taken as the plural of excellence, and understood of God, as in Deu. 10:17, Psa. 135: 3, Mal. 1: 6; or of earthly lords or rulers, as in Gen. 40: 1, 2Sa. 10: 3, 1Ki. 12:27. The former view seems to us decidedly correct, for it cannot be discerned how the suffix should (according to Bertheau’s opinion) prevent our thinking of the service of God, if the repairing of the wall of Jerusalem may be regarded as a service required by God and rendered to Him. Besides, the fact that **אֲדִנְיָהִם** is only used of kings, and is inapplicable whether to the authorities in Jerusalem or to Nehemiah, speaks against referring it to secular rulers or authorities.

Neh. 3: 6-12. FROM THE GATE OF THE OLD WALL TO THE VALLEY GATE. — V. 6. **שַׁעַר הַיְשָׁנָה** does not mean the old gate, for **הַיְשָׁנָה** is genitive. Schultz (*Jerus.* p. 90), Thenius, and Bertheau supply **הַעִיר**, gate of the old town, and explain the name from the fact that Bezetha, the new town, already existed as a suburb or village in front of the gate, which was named after the contrast. To this Arnold rightly objects (in Herzog’s *Realencycl.* xviii. p. 628) that it is by no means proved that there was at that time any contrast between the old and new towns, and as well as Hupfeld (*die topograph. Streitfragen über Jerus.*, in the *morgenl. Zeitschrift*, xv. p. 231) supplies **חֻמָּתָה**: gate of the old wall. He does not, however, derive this designation from the remark (v. 8), “They fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall,” as though this old wall received its name from having been left undestroyed by the Chaldeans, which is irreconcilable with the fact (4-8) that both the gate of the old wall and the portions of wall adjoining it on each side were now built, but understands the term “old wall” as used in contrast to the “broad wall,” which had indeed been rebuilt after the destruction

by Joash (2Ki. 14:13). This view we esteem to be correct. The individuals specified as the builders of this gate are not further known. That two *principes* were employed in the rebuilding of this gate is explained by Ramb. as arising *vel quod penitus disturbata a Chaldaeis, vel quod magnis sumtibus reparanda fuit, quos unus princeps ferre non potuit.*

Neh. 3: 7. Next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah. If Melatiah is to be regarded as the superintendent of the men of Gibeon, Jadon the Meronothite must be equally esteemed that of the men of Mizpah. Meronoth, mentioned only here and 1Ch. 27:30, must have been some small place near Mizpah. Mizpah (הַמִּצְפָּה, the watch-tower) is probably the modern *Nebi Samwil*, two leagues to the north-east of Jerusalem; see rem. on Jos. 19:26. The meaning of the words next following, לְכֹסֵא פִתְחַת וּגְוֹ, is questionable. Bertheau, together with Osiander, Cler., de Wette, and others, understands them as more precisely defining the men before named, as men of Gibeon and Mizpah, of the throne or belonging to the throne of the Pechah of Eber hannahar. This addition brings to light the fact that Jews who were not under the jurisdiction of Nehemiah, nevertheless took part in the restoration of the wall. It also distinguishes these men of Mizpah from those mentioned vv. 15 and 19, who were certainly not under the Pechah of Eber hannahar. Finally, the boundary of the little territory of the returned Jewish community must have been at about Mizpah and Gibeon; and a statement that certain inhabitants of this district were not under the Pechah of Jerusalem, but under the Pechah of the province west of Euphrates, would agree with the position of Gibeon and Mizpah. None, however, of these reasons are of much force. For if, according to vv. 5 and 27, the Tekoites repaired two different lengths of wall, without this fact implying any distinction between these two parties of Tekoite builders, the same may be the case with the men of Gibeon and Mizpah. Besides, neither in this verse nor in vv. 15 and 19 are the men of Mizpah in general spoken of, so as to make a distinction necessary; for in this verse two chiefs, Melatiah and Jadon, are designated as men of Gibeon and Mizpah, and in 15 and 19 two rulers of the district of Mizpah are specified by name. Hence the view that part of the inhabitants of Mizpah were under the jurisdiction of the Pechah of the province west of Euphrates, and part under that of the Pechah of Jerusalem, is devoid of probability. Finally, there is no adequate analogy for the metonymy set up in support of this view, viz., that כֹּסֵא, a seat, a throne, stands for jurisdiction. The words in question can have only a local signification. כֹּסֵא may indeed by metonymy be used for the official residence, but not for the official or judicial district, or jurisdiction of the Pechah. לְכֹסֵא does not state the point to which, but the direction or locality in which, these persons repaired the wall: “towards

the seat of the Pechah,” i.e., at the place where the court or tribunal of the governor placed over the province on this side Euphrates was held when he came to Jerusalem to administer justice, or to perform any other official duties required of him. This being so, it appears from this verse that this court was within the northern wall, and undoubtedly near a gate.

Neh. 3: 8. Next to him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah of the goldsmiths, and next to him repaired Hananiah, a son of the apothecaries. צורפים is in explanatory apposition to the name Uzziel, and the plural is used to denote that his fellow-artisans worked with him under his direction. Hananiah is called בן־הרקחִים, son of the apothecaries, i.e., belonging to the guild of apothecaries. The obscure words, וַיֵּצְאוּ וְגו', “and they left Jerusalem unto the broad wall,” have been variously interpreted. From *Neh. 12:38*, where the broad wall is also mentioned, it appears that a length of wall between the tower of the furnaces and the gate of Ephraim was thus named, and not merely a place in the wall distinguished for its breadth, either because it stood out or formed a corner, as Bertheau supposes; for the reason adduced for this opinion, viz., that it is not said that the procession went along the broad wall, depends upon a mistaken interpretation of the passage cited. The expression “the broad wall” denotes a further length of wall; and as this lay, according to *Neh. 12:38*, west of the gate of Ephraim, the conjecture forces itself upon us, that the broad wall was that 400 cubits of the wall of Jerusalem, broken down by the Israelite king Joash, from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate (*2Ki. 14:13*), and afterwards rebuilt by Uzziel of a greater breadth, and consequently of increased strength (*Joseph. Antiq. ix. 10. 3*). Now the gate of Ephraim not being mentioned among the rebuilt gates, and this gate nevertheless existing (according to *Neh. 8:16*) in the days of Nehemiah, the reason of this omission must be the circumstance that it was left standing when the wall of Jerusalem was destroyed. The remark, then, in this verse seems to say the same concerning the broad wall, whether we understand it to mean: the builders left Jerusalem untouched as far as the broad wall, because this place as well as the adjoining gate of Ephraim needed no restoration; or: the Chaldeans had here left Jerusalem, i.e., either the town or town-wall, standing. So Hupfeld in his above-cited work, p. 231; Arnold; and even older expositors. ¹⁷

Neh. 3: 9, 10. Further lengths of wall were built by Rephaiah ben Hur, the ruler of the half district of Jerusalem, i.e., of the district of country belonging to Jerusalem (comp. v. 19 with v. 15, where Mizpah and the district of Mizpah are distinguished); by Jedaiah ben Harumaph, וַיִּבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ, and indeed before (opposite) his house, i.e., the portion of wall which lay opposite his own dwelling; and by Hattush the son of Hashabniah. Whether Hattush is to be

identified with the priest of this name (Neh. 10: 5), or with the similarly named descendant of David (Ezr. 8: 2), or with neither, cannot be determined.

Neh. 3:11. A second section of wall was repaired by Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashshub ben Pahath-Moab, two families who came up with Zerubbabel, Ezr. 2: 6 and 32. Bertheau understands **מִדָּה שְׁנִיָּת** of a second section of wall added to a first already repaired by the same builders. So, too, he says, did Meremoth ben Urijah build one portion, v. 4, and a second, v. 21; comp. vv. 5 and 27, 15 and 19, 8 and 30. This first portion, however, which this mention of a second presupposes, not being named, he infers that our present text has not preserved its original completeness, and thinks it probable, from 12:38 and 39, that certain statements, in this description, relating to the gate of Ephraim and its neighbourhood, which once stood before v. 8, have been omitted. This inference is unfounded. The non-mention of the gate of Ephraim is to be ascribed, as we have already remarked on v. 8, to other reasons than the incompleteness of the text; and the assertion that **מִדָּה שְׁנִיָּת** assumes that a former portion was repaired by the same builders, receives no support from a comparison of vv. 5 with 27, 15 with 19, and 8 with 30. Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, who, according to v. 30, built **מִדָּה שְׁנִי**, are not identical with Hananiah the son of the apothecaries, v. 8. The same remark applies to Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah (v. 19), and Shallum the ruler of the district of Mizpah (v. 15). Only in vv. 5 and 27, and 4 and 21, are the names of the builders the same. Moreover, besides vv. 21 and 27, **מִדָּה שְׁנִיָּת** occurs five times more (vv. 11, 19, 20, 24, and 30) with respect to builders not previously (nor subsequently) mentioned in this list. Hence, in five different places, the names of the building parties, and the notices of the portions of wall built by them respectively, must have been lost, — a circumstance *à priori* incredible. When, however, we consider the verses, in which **מִדָּה שְׁנִיָּת** occurs, more closely, the second length is, in vv. 19, 20, 21, 24, and 27, more nearly defined by a statement of locality: thus, in v. 19, we have a second piece over against the ascent to the arsenal at the angle; in v. 20, a second piece from the angle to the door of the house of Eliashib; in v. 21, a second piece from the door of the house of Eliashib to...; in v. 24, a second piece from the house of Azariah to..., who, according to v. 23, built near his own house; in v. 27, a second piece over against the great projecting tower..., as far as which, according to v. 26, the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel. From all this, it is evident that **מִדָּה שְׁנִיָּת** in these verses, always denotes a second portion of that length of wall previously spoken of, or a portion next to that of which the building was previously mentioned. And so must **מִדָּה שְׁנִיָּת** be understood in the present verse (11), where it is used because Malchiah and Hashshub repaired or built the tower of the furnaces, besides the portion of wall. **שְׁנִיָּת**

מִדָּה may be rendered, “another or a further piece.” the word שְׁנִיתָ is chosen, because that previously mentioned is regarded as a first. The tower of the furnaces lay, according to this verse and 12:38, where alone it is again mentioned, between the broad wall and the valley-gate. Now, since there was between the gate of Ephraim and the corner-gate a portion of wall four hundred cubits long (see 2Ki. 14:13), which, as has been above remarked, went by the name of the broad wall, it is plain that the tower of the furnaces must be sought for in the neighbourhood of the corner-gate, or perhaps even identified with it. This is the simplest way of accounting for the omission of any notice in the present description of this gate, which is mentioned not merely before (2Ch. 26: 9; Jer. 31:38; and 2Ki. 14:13), but also after, the captivity (Zec. 14:10). It is probable that the tower of the furnaces served as a defence for the corner-gate at the north-western corner of the town, where now lie, upon an earlier building of large stones with morticed edges, probably a fragment of the old Jewish wall, the ruins of the ancient *Kal'at el Dshalud* (tower of Goliath), which might, at the time of the Crusades, have formed the corner bastion of the city: comp. *Rob. Palestine*, ii. p. 114; *Biblical Researches*, p. 252; and Tobler, *Topogr.* i. p. 67f.

Neh. 3:12. Next repaired Shallum, ruler of the other (comp. v. 9) half district of Jerusalem, he and his daughters. שָׁלֻם can only refer to Shallum, not to בְּלָדָה, which would make the daughters signify the daughters of the district, of the villages and places in the district.

Neh. 3:13, 14. From the valley-gate to the dung-gate. The *valley-gate* lay in the west, in the neighbourhood of the present Jaffa gate (see rem. on Neh. 2:13), “where,” as Tobler, *Topogr.* i. p. 163, expresses it, “we may conclude there must almost always have been, on the ridge near the present citadel, the site in the time of Titus of the water-gate also (Joseph. *bell. Jud.* v. 7. 3), an entrance provided with gates.” Hanun and the inhabitants of *Zanoah* are here connected, probably because Hanun was the chief or ruler of the inhabitants of this place. *Zanoah*, now *Zanna*, is in the *Wady Ismail*, west of Jerusalem; see rem. on Jos. 15:34. They built and set up its doors, etc.; comp. v. 6. The further statement, “and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung-gate,” still depends on הִחְזִיק, the principal verb of the verse. It is incomprehensible how Bertheau can say that this statement does not refer to the repairing of the wall, but only declares that the distance from the valley-gate to the dung-gate amounted to one thousand cubits. For the remark, that a section of such a length is, in comparison with the other sections, far too extensive, naturally proves nothing more than that the wall in this part had suffered less damage, and therefore needed less repair. The number one thousand cubits is certainly stated in round numbers. The length from the present Jaffa gate to the

supposed site of the dung-gate, on the south-western edge of Zion, is above two thousand five hundred feet. The dung-gate may, however, have been placed at a greater distance from the road leading to *Baher*. **הַשְּׁפוֹת** is only another form for **הַשְּׁפוֹת** (without **ש** prosthetic). Malchiah ben Rechab, perhaps a Rechabite, built and fortified the dung-gate; for though the Rechabites were forbidden to build themselves houses (Jer. 35: 7), they might, without transgressing this paternal injunction, take part in building the fortifications of Jerusalem (Berth.). This conjecture is, however, devoid of probability, for a Rechabite would hardly be a prince or ruler of the district of Beth-haccerem. The name Rechab occurs as early as the days of David, 2Sa. 4: 5. **בֵּית־הַכֶּרֶם**, i.e., the garden or vineyard-house, where, according to Jer. 6: 1, the children of Benjamin were wont to set up a banner, and to blow the trumpet in Tekoa, is placed by Jerome (Comm. Jer. 6) upon a hill between Jerusalem and Tekoa; on which account Pococke (*Reise*, ii. p. 63) thinks Beth-Cherem must be sought for on the eminence now known as the Frank mountain, the Dshebel Fureidis, upon which was the Herodium of Josephus. This opinion is embraced with some hesitation by Robinson (*Pal.* ii. p. 397), and unreservedly by Wilson (*The Holy City*, i. p. 396) and v. de Velde, because “when we consider that this hill is the highest point in the whole district, and is by reason of its isolated position and conical shape very conspicuous, we shall find that no other locality better corresponds with the passage cited.

Neh. 3:15. The *fountain-gate* and a portion of wall adjoining it was repaired by Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, the ruler of the district of Mizpah. **כָּל־חֲנוּהַ** occurs again, Neh. 11: 5, apparently as the name of another individual. To **יְבַנְנוּ** is added **יְמַלְלֵנוּ**, he covered it, from **מָלַל**, to shade, to cover, answering to the **קְרוּהוּ** of vv. 3 and 6, probably to cover with a layer of beams. The position of the fountain-gate is apparent from the description of the adjoining length of wall which Shallum also repaired. This was “the wall of the pool of Shelach (Siloah) by the king’s garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.” The word **שְׁלַח** recalls **שְׁלוּחַ**; the pool of Shelach can be none other than the pool which received its water through the **שְׁלַח**, i.e., *mission (aquae)*. By the researches of Robinson (*Pal.* ii. p. 148f.) and Tobler (*Die Siloahquelle u. der Oelberg*, p. 6f.), it has been shown that the pool of Siloah receives its water from a subterranean conduit 1750 feet long, cut through the rock from the Fountain of the Virgin, *Ain Sitti Miriam*, on the eastern slope of Ophel. Near to the pool of Siloah, on the eastern declivity of Zion, just where the Tyropoean valley opens into the vale of Kidron, is found an old and larger pool (*Birket el Hamra*), now covered with grass and trees, and choked with earth, called by Tobler the lower pool of Siloah, to distinguish it from the one still existing,

which, because it lies north-west of the former, he calls the upper pool of Siloah. One of these pools of Siloah, probably the lower and larger, is certainly the king's pool mentioned Neh. 2:14, in the neighbourhood of which lay, towards the east and south-east, the king's garden. The wall of the pool of Shelach need not have reached quite up to the pool, but may have gone along the edge of the south-eastern slope of Zion, at some distance therefrom. In considering the next particular following, "unto the stairs that go down from the city of David," we must turn our thoughts towards a locality somewhat to the north of this pool, the description now proceeding from the south-eastern corner of the wall northward. These stairs are not yet pointed out with certainty, unless perhaps some remains of them are preserved in the "length of rocky escarpment," which Robinson (*Pal.* ii. p. 102, and *Biblical Researches*, p. 247) remarked on the narrow ridge of the eastern slope of the hill of Zion, north of Siloam, at a distance of 960 feet from the present wall of the city, "apparently the foundations of a wall or of some similar piece of building." ⁸

Neh. 3:16-19. The wall from the steps leading from the city of David to the angle opposite the armoury. From v. 16 onwards we find for the most part אֶחָדָיו, after him, instead of עַל יָדוֹ, which only occurs again in vv. 17 and 19. Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of half the district of Beth-zur (see rem. on 2Ch. 11: 7), repaired the wall as far as "opposite the sepulchres of David, and unto the pool that was made, and to the house of the heroes." The sepulchres of David are the sepulchres of the house of David in the city of David (comp. 2Ch. 32:33). "Opposite the sepulchres of David" is the length of wall on the eastern side of Zion, where was probably, as Thenius endeavours to show in the *Zeitschr.* of the *deutsch morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxi. p. 495f., an entrance to the burying-place of the house of David, which was within the city. The "pool that was made" must be sought at no great distance, in the Tyropoean valley, but has not yet been discovered. The view of Krafft (*Topographie von Jerusalem*, p. 152), that it was the reservoir artificially constructed by Hezekiah, between the two walls for the water of the old pool (Isa. 22:11), rests upon incorrect combinations. "The house of the heroes" is also unknown. In vv. 17 and 18, the lengths of wall repaired by the three building parties there mentioned are not stated. "The Levites, Rehum the son of Bani," stands for: the Levites under Rehum the son of Bani. There was a Rehum among those who returned with Zerubbabel, 12: 3, Ezr. 2: 2; and a Bani occurs among the Levites in 9: 5. After him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of half the district of Keilah, for his district. Keilah, situate, according to Jos. 15:44 and 1Sa. 23: 1, in the hill region, is probably the village of Kila, discovered by Tobler (vol. iii. p. 151), eastward of Beit Dshibrin. By the addition לְבַלְבָּלוֹ, for his district, i.e., that half of the whole district which was under his rule, "it is expressly stated that the two halves of the district of Keilah worked apart one

from the other” (Bertheau). The other half is mentioned in the verse next following.

Neh. 3:18. “Their brethren” are the inhabitants of the second half, who were under the rule of Bavai the son of Henadad.

Neh. 3:19. Next to these repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece (on **מִדָּה שְׁנִיָּת**, see rem. on v. 11) opposite the ascent to the armoury of the angle. **הַנְּשֵׁק** or **הַנְּשֵׁק** (in most editions) is probably an abbreviation of **בֵּית הַנְּשֵׁק**, arsenal, armoury; and **הַמְּקָצוּעַ** is, notwithstanding the article in **הַנְּשֵׁק**, genitive; for to combine it as an accusative with **עֲלוֹת**, and read, “the going up of the armoury upon the angle,” gives no suitable meaning. The locality itself cannot indeed be more precisely stated. The armoury was probably situate on the east side of Zion, at a place where the wall of the city formed an angle; or it occupied an angle within the city itself, no other buildings adjoining it on the south. The opinion of Bertheau, that the armoury stood where the tower described by Tobler (*Dritte Wand.* p. 228) stands, viz., about midway between the modern Zion gate and the dung-gate, and of which he says that “its lower strata of stones are undoubtedly of a remoter date than the rebuilding of the wall in the sixteenth century,” coincides with the assumption already refuted, that the old wall of the city of David passed, like the southern wall of modern Jerusalem, over Mount Zion.

Neh. 3:20-25. The wall from the angle to the place of the court of the prison by the king’s upper house. — V. 20. After him Baruch the son of Zabbai emulously repaired a second length of wall, from the angle to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. Bertheau objects to the reading **הַחֲרָה**, and conjectures that it should be **הַחֲרָה**, “up the hill.” But the reason he adduces, viz., that often as the word **הַחֲרָה** occurs in this description, a further definition is nowhere else added to it, speaks as much against, as for his proposed alteration; definitions of locality never, throughout the entire narrative, preceding **הַחֲרָה**, but uniformly standing after it, as also in the present verse. Certainly **הַחֲרָה** cannot here mean either to be angry, or to be incensed, but may without difficulty be taken, in the sense of the Tiphal **חָרָה**, to emulate, to contend (Jer. 22:15, 12: 5), and the perfect adverbially subordinated to the following verb (comp. Gesen. *Gramm.* § 142, 3, a). The Keri offers **נָבִי** instead of **נָבִי**, probably from Ezr. 2: 9, but on insufficient grounds, the name **נָבִי** occurring also Ezr. 10:28. Of the position of the house of Eliashib the high priest, we know nothing further than what appears from these verses (20 and 21), viz., that it stood at the northern part of the eastern side of Zion (not at the south-western angle of the temple area, as Bertheau supposes), and extended

some considerable distance from south to north, the second length of wall built by Meremoth reaching from the door at its southern end to the תְּכֵלֵית, termination, at its northern end. On Meremoth, see rem. on v. 4.

Neh. 3:22. Farther northwards repaired the priests, the men of the district of Jordan. כְּבָר does not, as Bertheau infers from Neh. 12:28, signify the country round Jerusalem, but here, as there, the valley of the Jordan. See rem. on Neh. 12:28 and on Gen. 13:10. Hence this verse informs us that priests were then dwelling in the valley of the Jordan, probably in the neighbourhood of Jericho. The length of wall built by these priests is not further particularized.

Neh. 3:23. Further on repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house, and Azariah the son of Maaseiah, by his house. Nothing further is known of these individuals.

Neh. 3:24. Next repaired Binnui the son of Henadad, a second portion from the house of Azariah, to the angle and to the corner; and further on (v. 25) Palal the son of Uzzai, from opposite the angle and the high tower which stands out from the king's house by the court of the prison. We join הַמְּגִדֵּל to הָעֵלְיוֹן, though it is also verbally admissible to combine it with בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ, "the tower which stands out from the king's upper house," because nothing is known of an upper and lower king's house. It would be more natural to assume (with Bertheau) that there was an upper and a lower tower at the court of the prison, but this is not implied by הָעֵלְיוֹן. The word means first, high, elevated, and its use does not assume the existence of a lower tower; while the circumstance that the same tower is in v. 27 called the great (הַגָּדוֹל) tells in favour of the meaning high in the present case. The court of the prison was, according to Jer. 32: 2, in or near the king's house; it is also mentioned Jer. 32: 8, 12, 33: 1, 37:21, 38: 6, 13, 28, and 39:14. But from none of these passages can it be inferred, as by Bertheau, that it was situate in the neighbourhood of the temple. His further remark, too, that the king's house is not the royal palace in the city of David, but an official edifice standing upon or near the temple area, and including the court of the prison with its towers, is entirely without foundation.¹⁹

The royal palace lay, according to Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 5. 2, opposite the temple (ἀντικρὺς ἔχων ναόν), i.e., on the north-eastern side of Zion, and this is quite in accordance with the statements of this verse; for as it is not till v. 27 that the description of the wall-building reaches the walls of Ophel, all the localities and buildings spoken of in vv. 24-27a must be sought for on the east side of Zion. The court of the prison formed, according to Eastern custom, part of the royal fortress upon Zion. The citadel had, moreover, a high tower. This is obvious from Cant. 4: 4, though the tower of David there mentioned, on which hung a

thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men, may not be identical with the tower of the king's house in this passage; from Mic. 4: 8, where the tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, is the tower of the royal citadel; and from Isa. 32:14, where citadel and tower (**בִּחִין**, properly watch-tower) answer to the **אַרְמוֹן** of the royal citadel, which lay with its forts upon the hill of Zion. This high tower of the king's house, i.e., of the royal citadel, stood, according to our verses, in the immediate neighbourhood of the angle and the corner (**הַפְּנֵה**); for the section of wall which reached to the **פְּנֵה** lay opposite the angle and the high tower of the king's house. The wall here evidently formed a corner, running no longer from south to north, but turning eastwards, and passing over Ophel, the southern spur of Moriah. A length from this corner onwards was built by Pedaiah the son of Parosh; comp. Ezr. 2: 3.

Neh. 3:26, 27. Having now reached the place where the wall encloses Ophel, a remark is inserted, v. 26, on the dwellings of Nethinim, i.e., of the temple servants. The Nethinim dwelt in Ophel as far as (the place) before the water-gate toward the east, and the tower that standeth out. **הַמִּגְדָּל הַזֶּה** still depends upon **עַד נִגְדָה**. The water-gate towards the east, judging from 12:37, lay beyond the south-eastern corner of the temple area. Bertheau, reasoning upon the view that the open space of the house of God, where Ezra spoke to the assembled people (Ezr. 10: 9), is identical with the open place before the water-gate mentioned Neh. 8: 1, 3, 16, places it on the east side of the temple area, near where the golden gate (*Rab er Rahme*) now stands. This identity, however, cannot be proved; and even if it could, it would by no means follow that this open space lay on the east side of the temple area. And as little does it follow from 12:37, as we shall show when we reach this passage. **הַמִּגְדָּל הַזֶּה** is said by Bertheau to have belonged perhaps to the water-gate towards the east, since, by reason of the statements contained in vv. 31 and 32, we must not seek it so far northwards on the east side of the temple area, as to combine it with the remains of a tower projecting seven and a half feet from the line of wall at the north-east corner, and described by Robinson (*Biblical Researches*, p. 226). But even if the tower in question must not be identified with these remains, it by no means follows that it stood in the neighbourhood of the golden gate. Even Arnold, in his work already cited, p. 636, remarks, in opposition to Bertheau's view, that "it is evident from the whole statement that the tower standing out from the king's house, in vv. 25, 26, and 27, is one and the same, and that Bertheau's view of our having here three separate towers can hardly be maintained," although he, as well as Bertheau, transposes both the king's house and the court of the prison to the south of the Temple area. The similar appellation of this tower as **הַיְצֵא** in the three verses speaks so decidedly for its identity, that very forcible reasons must be adduced before the opposite view

can be adopted. In v. 26 it is not a locality near the water-gate in the east which is indicated by **הַמִּגְדָּל הַיְצִיאָה**, but the western boundary of the dwellings of the Nethinim lying opposite. They dwelt, that is, upon Ophel, southwards of the temple area, on a tract of land reaching from the water-gate in the east to opposite the outstanding tower of the royal citadel in the west, i.e., from the eastern slope of the ridge of Ophel down to the Tyropoean valley.

Neh. 3:27. After them the Tekoites repaired a second piece from opposite the great tower that standeth out to the wall of Ophel. The great (high) tower of the king's house within the city wall being some distance removed therefrom, the portion of wall on the eastern ridge of Zion from south to north, reaching as far as the turning and the corner, and the commencement of the wall running from this corner eastwards, might both be designated as lying opposite to this tower. The portion mentioned in our verse passed along the Tyropoean valley as far as the wall of Ophel. King Jotham had built much on the wall of Ophel (2Ch. 27: 3); and Manasseh had surrounded Ophel with a very high wall (2Ch. 33:14), i.e., carried the wall round its western, southern, and eastern sides. On the north no wall was needed, Ophel being protected on this side by the southern wall of the temple area.

Neh. 3:28-32. The wall of Ophel and the eastern side of the temple area. — V. 28. Above the horse-gate repaired the priests, each opposite his own house. The site of the horse-gate appears, from 2Ch. 23:15 compared with 2Ki. 11: 6, to have been not far distant from the temple and the royal palace; while according to the present verse, compared with v. 27, it stood in the neighbourhood of the wall of Ophel, and might well be regarded as even belonging to it. Hence we have, with Thenius, to seek it in the wall running over the Tyropoean valley, and uniting the eastern edge of Zion with the western edge of Ophel in the position of the present dung-gate (*Bab el Mogharibeh*). This accords with Jer. 31:40, where it is also mentioned; and from which passage Bertheau infers that it stood at the western side of the valley of Kidron, below the east corner of the temple area. The particular **מֵעַל**, “from over,” that is, above, is not to be understood of a point *northwards* of the horse-gate, but denotes the place where the wall, passing up from Zion to Ophel, ascended the side of Ophel east of the horse-gate. If, then, the priests here repaired each opposite his house, it is evident that a row of priests' dwellings were built on the western side of Ophel, south of the south-western extremity of the temple area.

Neh. 3:29. Zadok ben Immer (Ezr. 2:37) was probably the head of the priestly order of Immer. Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the east gate, can hardly be the same as the Shemaiah of the sons of Shecaniah entered among the

descendants of David in 1Ch. 3:22. He might rather be regarded as a descendant of the Shemaiah of 1Ch. 26: 6f., if the latter had not been enumerated among the sons of Obed-Edom, whose duty was to guard the south side of the temple. The east gate is undoubtedly the east gate of the temple, and not to be identified, as by Bertheau, with the water-gate towards the east (v. 26). The place where Shemaiah repaired is not more precisely defined; nor can we infer, with Bertheau, from the circumstance of his being the keeper of the east gate, that he, together with his subordinate keepers, laboured at the fortification of this gate and its adjoining section of wall. Such a view is opposed to the order of the description, which passes on to a portion of the wall of Ophel; see rem. on v. 31.

Neh. 3:30. אֲחֵרִי here and in v. 31 gives no appropriate sense, and is certainly only an error of transcription arising from the *scriptio defect.* אֲחֵרִי. Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, are not further known. The name of Meshullam the son of Berechiah occurs previously in v. 4; but the same individual can hardly be intended in the two verses, the one mentioned in v. 4 being distinguished from others of the same name by the addition *ben Meshezabeel*. שְׁנִי for שְׁנִית (vv. 27, 24, and elsewhere) is grammatically incorrect, if not a mere error of transcription. נֶגֶד נִשְׁבָּתוֹ, before his dwelling. נִשְׁבָּה occurs only here and 13: 7, and in the plural הַנִּשְׁבָּוֹת, Neh. 12:44; it seems, judging from the latter passage, only another form for לִשְׁבָּה, chamber; while in Neh. 13: 7, on the contrary, נִשְׁבָּה is distinguished from לִשְׁבָּה, Neh. 13: 4, 5. Its etymology is obscure. In Neh. 13: 7 it seems to signify dwelling.

Neh. 3:31. הַצֶּרֶפִי is not a proper name, but an appellative, son of the goldsmith, or perhaps better, member of the goldsmiths' guild, according to which הַצֶּרֶפִי does not stand for הַצֶּרֶף, but designates those belonging to the goldsmiths. The statements, (he repaired) unto the house of the Nethinim, and of the merchants opposite the gate הַמִּפְקָד, and to the upper chamber of the corner, are obscure. This rendering is according to the Masoretic punctuation; while the LXX, on the contrary, translate according to a different division of the words: Malchiah repaired as far as the house of the Nethinim, and the spice-merchants (repaired) opposite the gate Miphkad, and as far as the ascent of the corner. This translation is preferred by Bertheau, but upon questionable grounds. For the objection made by him, that if the other be adopted, either the same termination would be stated twice in different forms, or that two different terminations are intended, in which case it does not appear why one only should first be mentioned, and then the other also, is not of much importance. In v. 24 also two terminations are mentioned, while in v. 16 we have even three

together. And why should not this occur here also? Of more weight is the consideration, that to follow the Masoretic punctuation is to make the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants but *one* building. Since, however, we know nothing further concerning the edifice in question, the subject is not one for discussion. The rendering of the LXX, on the other hand, is opposed by the weighty objection that there is a total absence of analogy for supplying **הַחַיִּיקוּ** **וְאֶחָדָיו**; for throughout this long enumeration of forty-two sections of wall, the verb **הַחַיִּיקוּ** or **הַחַיִּיקוּ**, or some corresponding verb, always stands either before or after every name of the builders, and even the **אֶחָדָיו** is omitted only once (v. 25). To the statement, “as far as the house of the Nethinim and the merchants,” is appended the further definition: before (opposite) the gate **הַמִּפְקָד**. This word is reproduced in the LXX as a proper name (**τοῦ Μαφκαδ**), as is also **בֵּית הַנְּתִינִים**, **ἕως Βεθὰν Ναθινίμ**); in the Vulgate it is rendered appellatively: *contra portam judiciale*; and hence by Luther, *Rathsthor*. Thenius translates (*Stadt*, p. 9): the muster or punishment gate. **מִפְקָד** does not, however, signify punishment, although the view may be correct that the gate took the name **הַמִּפְקָד** from the **מִפְקַד הַבַּיִת** mentioned Eze. 43:21, where the bullock of the sin-offering was to be burnt without the sanctuary; and it may be inferred from this passage that near the temple of Solomon also there was an appointed place for burning the flesh of the sin-offering without the sanctuary. In Ezekiel’s temple vision, this **מִפְקַד הַבַּיִת** is probably to be sought in the space behind the sanctuary, i.e., at the western end of the great square of five hundred cubits, set apart for the temple, and designated the *Gizra*, or separate place. In the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel, however, the place in question could not have been situate at the west side of the temple, between the temple and the city, which lay opposite, but only on the south side of the temple area, outside the court, upon Ophel, where Thenius has delineated it in his plan of Jerusalem before the captivity. Whether it lay, however, at the south-western corner of the temple space (Thenius), or in the middle, or near the east end of the southern side of the external wall of the temple or temple court, can be determined neither from the present passage nor from Ezekiel’s vision. Not from Eze. 43:21, because the temple vision of this prophet is of an ideal character, differing in many points from the actual temple; not from the present passage, because the position of the house of the Nethinim and the merchants is unknown, and the definition **נֶגְדָה**, (before) opposite the gate Miphkad, admits of several explanations. Thus much only is certain concerning this Miphkad gate, — on the one hand, from the circumstance that the wall was built before (**נֶגְדָה**) or opposite this gate, on the other, from its omission in Neh. 12:39, where the prison-gate is mentioned as being in this neighbourhood in its stead, — that it was not a gate of the city,

but a gate through which the **מִפְקֵד** was reached. Again, it is evident that the **עֲלִיָּה** of the corner which is mentioned as the length of wall next following, must be sought for at the south-eastern corner of the temple area. Hence the house of the temple servants and the merchants must have been situate south of this, on the eastern side of Ophel, where it descends into the valley of Kidron. **עֲלִיַּת הַפֶּנֶה**, the upper chamber of the corner, was perhaps a **ὑπερφῶν** of a corner tower, not at the north-eastern corner of the external circumvallation of the temple area (Bertheau), but at the south-eastern corner, which was formed by the junction at this point of the wall of Ophel with the eastern wall of the temple area. If these views are correct, all the sections mentioned from v. 28 to v. 31 belong to the wall surrounding Ophel. This must have been of considerable length, for Ophel extended almost to the pool of Siloam, and was walled round on its western, southern, and eastern sides.

Neh. 3:32. The last section, between the upper chamber of the corner and the sheep-gate, was repaired by the goldsmiths and the merchants. This is the whole length of the east wall of the temple as far as the sheep-gate, at which this description began (v. 1). The eastern wall of the temple area might have suffered less than the rest of the wall at the demolition of the city by the Chaldeans, or perhaps have been partly repaired at the time the temple was rebuilt, so that less restoration was now needed.

A survey of the whole enumeration of the gates and lengths of wall now restored and fortified, commencing and terminating as it does at the sheep-gate, and connecting almost always the several portions either built or repaired by the words **עַל יָדוֹ** (יָדָם) or **אֶחָדָיו**, gives good grounds for inferring that in the forty-two sections, including the gates, particularized vv. 1-32, we have a description of the entire fortified wall surrounding the city, without a single gap. In v. 7, indeed, as we learn by comparing it with Neh. 12:29, the mention of the gate of Ephraim is omitted, and in 30 or 31, to judge by Neh. 12:39, the prison-gate; while the wall lying between the dung-gate and the fountain-gate is not mentioned between vv. 14 and 15. The non-mention, however, of these gates and this portion of wall may be explained by the circumstance, that these parts of the fortification, having remained unharmed, were in need of no restoration. We read, it is true, in 2Ki. 25:10 and 11, that Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard of Nebuchadnezzar, burnt the king's house and all the great houses of the city, and that the army of the Chaldees broke down or destroyed (**נִתְּנָה**) the walls of Jerusalem round about; but these words must not be so pressed as to make them express a total levelling of the surrounding wall. The wall was only so far demolished as to be incapable of any longer serving as a defence to the city. And this end was fully accomplished when it was partially demolished in several places, because the portions of wall, and even the towers and gates, still

perhaps left standing, could then no longer afford any protection to the city. The danger that the Jews might easily refortify the city unless the fortifications were entirely demolished, was sufficiently obviated by the carrying away into captivity of the great part of the population. This explains the fact that nothing is said in this description of the restoration of the towers of Hananeel and Hammeah (v. 11), and that certain building parties repaired very long lengths of wall, as e.g., the 1000 cubits between the fountain-gate and the dung-gate, while others had very short portions appointed them. The latter was especially the case with those who built on the east side of Zion, because this being the part at which King Zedekiah fled from the city, the wall may here have been levelled to the ground.

From the consideration of the course of the wall, so far as the description in the present chapter enables us to determine it with tolerable certainty, and a comparison with the procession of the two bands of singers round the restored wall in Neh. 12:31-40, which agrees in the chief points with this description, it appears that the wall on the northern side of the city, before the captivity, coincided in the main with the northern wall of modern Jerusalem, being only somewhat shorter at the north-eastern and north-western corners; and that it ran from the valley (or Jaffa) gate by the tower of furnaces, the gate of Ephraim, the old gate, and the fish-gate to the sheep-gate, maintaining, on the whole, the same direction as the second wall described by Josephus (*bell. Jud.* v. 4. 2). In many places remains of this wall, which bear testimony to their existence at a period long prior to Josephus, have recently been discovered. In an angle of the present wall near the Latin monastery are found "remains of a wall built of mortice-edged stones, near which lie blocks so large that we are first took them for portions of the natural rock, but found them on closer inspection to be morticed stones removed from their place. A comparatively large number of stones, both in the present wall between the north-west corner of the tower and the Damascus gate, and in the adjoining buildings, are morticed and hewn out of ancient material, and we can scarcely resist the impression that this must have been about the direction of an older wall." So Wolcott and Tipping in Robinson's *New Biblical Researches*. Still nearer to the gate, about three hundred feet west of it, Dr. Wilson remarks (*Lands of the Bible*, i. p. 421), "that the wall, to some considerable height above its foundation, bears evidence, by the size and peculiarity of its stones, to its high antiquity," and attributes this portion to the old second wall (see Robinson). "Eastward, too, near the Damascus gate, and even near the eastern tower, are found very remarkable remains of Jewish antiquity. The similarity of these remains of wall to those surrounding the site of the temple is most surprising" (Tobler, *Dritte Wand.* p. 339). From these remains, and the intimations of Josephus concerning the second wall, Robinson justly infers that the ancient

wall must have run from the Damascus gate to a place in the neighbourhood of the Latin monastery, and that its course thence must have been nearly along the road leading northwards from the citadel to the Latin monastery, while between the monastery and the Damascus gate it nearly coincided with the present wall. Of the length from the Damascus gate to the sheep-gate no certain indications have as yet been found. According to Robinson's ideas, it probably went from the Damascus gate, at first eastwards in the direction of the present wall, and onwards to the highest point of Bezetha; but then bent, as Bertheau supposes, in a south-easterly direction, and ran to a point in the present wall lying north-east of the Church of St. Anne, and thence directly south towards the north-east corner of the temple area. On the south side, on the contrary, the whole of the hill of Zion belonged to the ancient city; and the wall did not, like the modern, pass across the middle of Zion, thus excluding the southern half of this hill from the city, but went on the west, south, and south-east, round the edge of Zion, so that the city of Zion was as large again as that portion of modern Jerusalem lying on the hill of Zion, and included the sepulchres of David and of the kings of Judah, which are now outside the city wall. Tobler (*Dritte Wand.* p. 336) believes that a trace of the course of the ancient wall has been discovered in the cutting in the rock recently uncovered outside the city, where, at the building of the Anglican Episcopal school, which lies two hundred paces westward under *En-Nebi-Daūd*, and the levelling of the garden and cemetery, were found edged stones lying scattered about, and "remarkable artificial walls of rock," whose direction shows that they must have supported the oldest or first wall of the city; for they are just so far distant from the level of the valley, that the wall could, or rather must, have stood there. "And," continues Tobler, "not only so, but the course of the wall of rock is also to a certain extent parallel with that of the valley, as must be supposed to be the case with a rocky foundation to a city wall." Finally, the city was bounded on its western and eastern sides by the valleys of Gihon and Jehoshaphat respectively.

Neh. 3:33-38 (Neh. 4: 1-6, A. V.). *The ridicule of Tobiah and Sanballat.* — Vv. 33 and 34. As soon as Sanballat heard that we were building (בָּנִים, *partic.*, expresses not merely the resolve or desire to build, but also the act of commencing), he was wroth and indignant, and vented his anger by ridiculing the Jews, saying before his brethren, i.e., the rulers of his people, and the army of Samaria (חֵיל, like Est. 1: 3, 2Ki. 18:17), — in other words, saying publicly before his associates and subordinates, — "What do these feeble Jews? will they leave it to themselves? will they sacrifice? will they finish it to-day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps that are burned?" מָה עֲשִׂים, not, What will they do? (Bertheau), for the participle is present, and does not stand for the future; but, What are they doing? The form אֲמָלַל, withered, powerless, occurs

here only. The subject of the four succeeding interrogative sentences must be the same. And this is enough to render inadmissible the explanation offered by older expositors of **הַיַּעֲזֹבוּ לָהֶם**: Will they leave to them, viz., will the neighbouring nations or the royal prefects allow them to build? Here, as in the case of the following verbs, the subject can only be the Jews. Hence Ewald seeks, both here and in v. 8, to give to the verb **עֲזַב** the meaning to shelter: Will they make a shelter for themselves, i.e., will they fortify the town? But this is quite arbitrary. Bertheau more correctly compares the passage, Psa. 10:14, **עֲזַבְנוּ עַל אֱלֹהִים**, we leave it to God; but incorrectly infers that here also we must supply **עַל אֱלֹהִים**, and that, Will they leave to themselves? means, Will they commit the matter to God. This mode of completing the sense, however, can by no means be justified; and Bertheau's conjecture, that the Jews now assembling in Jerusalem, before commencing the work itself, instituted a devotional solemnity which Sanballat was ridiculing, is incompatible with the correct rendering of the participle. **עֲזַב** construed with **ל** means to leave, to commit a matter to any one, like Psa. 10:14, and the sense is: Will they leave the building of the fortified walls to themselves? i.e., Do they think they are able with their poor resources to carry out this great work? This is appropriately followed by the next question: Will they sacrifice? i.e., bring sacrifices to obtain God's miraculous assistance? The ridicule lies in the circumstance that Sanballat neither credited the Jews with ability to carry out the work, nor believed in the overruling providence of the God whom the Jews worshipped, and therefore casts scorn by **הַיַּזְבָּחוּ** both upon the faith of the Jews in their God and upon the living God Himself. As these two questions are internally connected, so also are the two following, by which Sanballat casts a doubt upon the possibility of the work being executed. Will they finish (the work) on this day, i.e., to-day, directly? The meaning is: Is this a matter to be as quickly executed as if it were the work of a single day? The last question is: Have they even the requisite materials? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish which are burnt? The building-stone of Jerusalem was limestone, which gets softened by fire, losing its durability, and, so to speak, its vitality. This explains the use of the verb **חָיָה**, to revive, bestow strength and durability upon the softened crumbled stones, to fit the stones into a new building (Ges. *Lex.*). The construction **וַהֲמָה שְׂרוּפוֹת** is explained by the circumstance that **אַבְנִים** is by its form masculine, but by its meaning feminine, and that **הֲמָה** agrees with the form **אַבְנִים**.

Neh. 3:35. Tobiah the Ammonite, standing near Sanballat, and joining in in his rallery, adds: "Even that which they build, if a fox go up he will break their

stone wall;” i.e., even if they build up walls, the light footsteps of the stealthy fox will suffice to tread them down, and to make breaches in their work.

Neh. 3:36, 37. When Nehemiah heard of these contemptuous words, he committed the matter to God, entreating Him to hear how they (the Jews) were become a scorn, i.e., a subject of contempt, to turn the reproach of the enemies upon their own head, and to give them up the plunder in a land of captivity, i.e., in a land in which they would dwell as captives. He supplicates, moreover, that God would not cover, i.e., forgive (Psa. 85: 3), their iniquity, and that their sin might not be blotted out from before His face, i.e., might not remain unpunished, “for they have provoked to wrath before the builders,” i.e., openly challenged the wrath of God, by despising Him before the builders, so that they heard it. **הַכְּבִּיעִים** without an object, spoken of provoking the divine wrath by grievous sins; comp. 2Ki. 21: 6 with 2Ch. 33: 6.

Neh. 3:38. The Jews continued to build without heeding the ridicule of their enemies, “and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof,” i.e., the wall was so far repaired throughout its whole circumference, that no breach or gap was left up to half its height; “and the people had a heart to work,” i.e., the restoration went on so quickly because the people had a mind to work.

Neh. 4. THE ATTEMPTS OF THE ENEMIES TO HINDER THE WORK BY FORCE, AND NEHEMIAH’S PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THEM. — Vv. 1-8. When the enemies learnt that the restoration of the wall was evidently getting on, they conspired together to fight against Jerusalem (vv. 1 and 2). The Jews then prayed to God, and set a watch (v. 3). When the courage of the people began to fail, and their enemies spread a report of sudden attack being imminent, Nehemiah furnished the people on the wall with weapons, and encouraged the nobles and rulers to fight boldly for their brethren, their children, and their possessions (vv. 4-8). The Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites are here enumerated as enemies, besides Sanballat and Tobiah (vv. 2, 10, 19). The Arabians were incited to hostilities against the Jews by Geshem (11, 19), and the Ammonites by Tobiah; the Ashdodites, the inhabitants of the city and territory of Ashdod, in the coast district of Philistia, were perhaps encouraged to renew their old hatred of Judah by Sanballat the Horonite. When these enemies heard that the walls of Jerusalem were bandaged, i.e., that the breaches and damages in the wall were repaired, they were filled with wrath. The biblical expression, to lay on a bandage, here and 2Ch. 24:13, Jer. 8:22, 30:17, 33: 6, is derived from the healing of wounds by means of a bandage, and is explained by the sentence following: that the breaches began to be closed or stopped. The enemies conspired together to march against Jerusalem and injure it. **לֹא**, because the people of the town are meant. **תֹּעֵדָה** occurs but once more, viz., in

Isa. 32: 6, in the sense of error; here it signifies *calamities*, for, as Aben Ezra well remarks, *qui in angustiis constitutus est, est velut errans, qui nescit quid agat quove se vertat.*

Neh. 4: 3. The Jews, on the other hand, made preparation by prayer, and by setting a watch (מִשְׁמָר, comp. Neh. 7: 3, 13:30) day and night. *We*, viz., Nehemiah and the superintendents of the work, prayed and set a watch עֲלֵיהֶם, against them, to ward off a probable attack. מִפְּנֵיהֶם, for fear of them, comp. v. 10.

Neh. 4: 4. The placing of the watch day and night, and the continuous labour, must have pressed heavily upon the people; therefore Judah said: “The strength of the bearers of burdens fails, and there is much rubbish; we are not able to build the wall.” That is to say, the labour is beyond our power, we cannot continue it.

Neh. 4: 5. Their discouragement was increased by the words of their enemies, who said: They (the Jews) shall not know nor see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.

Neh. 4: 6. When, therefore, the Jews who dwelt near them, i.e., in the neighbourhood of the adversaries, and heard their words, came to Jerusalem, “and said to us ten times (i.e., again and again), that from all places ye must return to us, then I placed,” etc. Jews came from all places to Jerusalem, and summoned those who were building there to return home, for adversaries were surrounding the community on all sides: Sanballat and the Samaritans on the north, the Ammonites on the east, the Arabians on the south, and the Philistines (Ashdodites) on the west. אָשׁר before תָּשׁוּבוּ introduces their address, instead of כִּי; being thus used, e.g., before longer speeches, 1Sa. 15:20, 2Sa. 1: 4; and for כִּי generally, throughout the later books, in conformity to Aramaean usage. “Return to us” (שׁוּב עַל, as in 2Ch. 30: 9, for שׁוּב אֵל), said the Jews who came from all quarters to Jerusalem to their fellow-townsmen, who from Jericho, Gibeon, and Tekoa (comp. Neh. 3: 2, 3, 5, 7) were working on the wall of Jerusalem. These words express their fear lest those who were left at home, especially the defenceless women, children, and aged men, should be left without protection against the attacks of enemies, if their able-bodied men remained any longer in Jerusalem to take part in the building of the wall.

Neh. 4: 7a. V. 7a is hardly intelligible. We translate it: Then I placed at the lowest places behind the wall, at the dried-up places, I (even) placed the people, after their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. לְמָקוֹם מִתַּחַת לַמְּקוֹם is a stronger expression for מִתַּחַת לַמְּקוֹם when used to indicate

position, and **מִן** points out the direction. The sense is: at the lowest places from behind the wall. **בְּצִחִים** gives the nature of the places where the people were placed with arms. **צָחִיָּה** and **צִחִיָּהָה** mean a dry or bare place exposed to the heat of the sun: bare, uncovered, or empty places, perhaps bare hills, whence approaching foes might be discerned at a distance. The second **וַאֲשַׁמֵּיד** is but a reiteration of the verb, for the sake of combining it with its object, from which the **וַאֲשַׁמֵּיד** at the beginning of the verse was too far removed by the circumstantial description of the locality. ¹¹⁰

Neh. 4: 8. “And I looked, and rose up, and said.” These words can only mean: When I saw the people thus placed with their weapons, I went to them, and said to the nobles, etc., “Be not afraid of them (the enemies); remember the Lord, the great and the terrible,” who will fight for you against your enemies (Deu. 3:22, 20: 3, and 31: 6), “and fight ye for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses,” whom the enemies would destroy.

Neh. 4: 9-17. Thus was the design of the enemy circumvented, and the Jews returned to their work on the wall, which they had forsaken to betake themselves to their weapons. The manner in which they resumed their building work was, that one half held weapons, and the other half laboured with weapons in hand.

Neh. 4: 9. When our enemies heard that it (their intention) was known to us, and (that) God had brought their counsel to nought (through the measures with which we had met it), we returned all of us to the wall, every one to his work. The conclusion does not begin till **וַיָּפֹר הָאֵל**, 'נָשׁוּב' belonging to the premiss, in continuation of **כִּי נֹדַע**.

Neh. 4:10. From that day the half of my servants wrought at the work, and the other half of them held the spears and shields, the bows and the armour, i.e., carried the arms. The servants of Nehemiah are his personal retinue, v. 17, 5:10, 16, namely, Jews placed at his disposal as Pechah for official purposes. The **ו** before **הַרְמָחִים** was probably placed before this word, instead of before the **הַמְּגָנִים** following, by a clerical error; for if it stood before the latter also, it might be taken in the sense of *et — et*. **מִחֻיָּקִים**, instead of being construed with **ב**, is in the accusative, as also in v. 11, and even in Jer. 6:23 and Isa. 41: 9, 13. Unnecessary and unsuitable is the conjecture of Bertheau, that the word **בְּרָמָחִים** originally stood after **מִחֻיָּקִים**, and that a fresh sentence begins with **וְהָרְמָחִים**: and the other half held the spears; and the spears, the shields, and

the bows, and the armour, and the rulers, were behind the whole house of Judah, — a strange combination, which places the weapons and rulers behind the house of Judah. Besides, of the circumstance of the weapons being placed behind the builders, so that they might at any moment seize them, we not only read nothing in the text; but in vv. 11 and 12 just the contrary, viz., that the builders wrought with one hand, and with the other held a weapon. “The rulers were behind all the house of Judah,” i.e., each was behind his own people who were employed on the work, to encourage them in their labour, and, in case of attack, to lead them against the enemy. — In v. 11 **הַפְּנִיִּים בַּחֹמָה** is prefixed after the manner of a title. With respect to those who built the wall, both the bearers of burdens were lading with the one hand of each workman, and holding a weapon with the other, and the builders were building each with his sword girt on his side. The **ו** prefixed to **הַנְּשָׂאִים** and **הַפְּנִיִּים** means both; and **נְשָׂא בַסֶּבֶל**, bearers of burdens, who cleared away the rubbish, and worked as labourers. These, at all events, could do their work with one hand, which would suffice for emptying rubbish into baskets, and for carrying material in handle baskets. **בְּאַחַת יָדוֹ**, literally, with the one (namely) of his hands that was doing the work. The suffix of **יָדוֹ** points to the genitive following. **אַחַת וְאַחַת**, the one and the other hand. **הַשֵּׁלַח**, not a missile, but a weapon that was stretched out, held forth, usually a sword or some defensive weapon: see rem. on Jos. 2: 8, 2Ch. 32: 5. The builders, on the contrary, needed both hands for their work: hence they had swords girt to their sides. “And he that sounded the trumpet was beside me.” Nehemiah, as superintendent of the work, stood at the head of his servants, ready to ward off any attack; hence the trumpeter was beside him, to be able to give to those employed on the wall the signal for speedy muster in case danger should threaten.

Neh. 4:13f. Hence he said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, i.e., all employed in building, “The work is much (great) and wide, and we are separated upon the wall one far from another; in what place ye hear the sound of the trumpet, assemble yourselves to me: our God will fight for us.” — In v. 15 the whole is summed up, and for this purpose the matter of v. 10 is briefly repeated, to unite with it the further statement that they so laboured from early morning till late in the evening. “We (Nehemiah and his servants) laboured in the work, and half of them (of the servants) held the spears from the grey of dawn till the stars appeared.”

Neh. 4:16. He took moreover, a further precaution: he said to the people (i.e., to the labourers on the wall, and not merely to the warriors of the community, as Bertheau supposes): Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, i.e., to remain together during the night also, and not be scattered through the

surrounding district, “that they may be guardianship for us by night and labour by day.” The abstracts, guardianship and labour, stand for the concretes, guards and labourers. As לָנוּ, *to us*, refers to the whole community separated on the walls, so is אִישׁ וְנַעֲרֹו to be understood of all the workers, and not of the fighting men only. From אִישׁ וְנַעֲרֹו it only appears that the fathers of families and master builders had servants with them as labourers.

Neh. 4:17. Nehemiah, moreover, and his brethren (his kinsmen and the members of his house), and his servants, and the men of the guard in his retinue, were constantly in their clothes (“not putting off our clothes” to rest). The last words, אִישׁ שָׁלַח הַמַּיִם are very obscure, and give no tolerable sense, whether we explain הַמַּיִם of water for drinking or washing. Luther translates, Every one left off washing; but the words, Every one’s weapon was water, can never bear this sense. Roediger, in Gesen. *Thes.* s.v. שָׁלַח, seeks to alter הַמַּיִם into בְּיָדוֹ, to which Böttcher (*N. krit. Aehrenl.* iii. p. 219) rightly objects: “how could בְּיָדוֹ have been altered into הַמַּיִם, or הַמַּיִם have got into the text at all, if some portion of it had not been originally there? What this בְּיָדוֹ expresses, would be far more definitely given with the very slight correction of changing the closing ם of הַמַּיִם, and reading הַמִּינוּ = הַמִּינוּ (comp. 2Sa. 14:19); thus each had taken his missile on the right (in his right hand), naturally that he might be ready to discharge it in case of a hostile attack.” This conjecture seems to us a happy emendation of the unmeaning text, since נו might easily have been changed into ם; and we only differ in this matter from Böttcher, by taking שָׁלַח in its only legitimate meaning of weapon, and translating the words: And each laid his weapon on the right, viz., when he laid himself down at night to rest in his clothes, to be ready for fighting at the first signal from the watch.

Ch. 5. — Abolition of Usury — Nehemiah’s Unselfishness.

Neh. 5. The events related in this and the following chapter also occurred during the building of the wall. Zealously as the rulers and richer members of the community, following the example of Nehemiah, were carrying on this great undertaking by all the means in their power, the work could not fail to be a heavy burden to the poorer classes, who found it very difficult to maintain their families in these expensive times, especially since they were still oppressed by wealthy usurers. Hence great discontent arose, which soon vented itself in loud complaints. Those who had no property demanded corn for the support of their numerous families (v. 2); others had been obliged to pledge their fields and vineyards, some to procure corn for their hunger, some to be able to pay the king’s tribute; and these complained that they must now give their sons and daughters to bondage (vv. 3-5). When these complaints came to the ears of

Nehemiah, he was angry with the rulers; and calling an assembly, he set before them the great injustice of usury, and called upon them to renounce it, to restore to their brethren their mortgaged lands, and to give them what they had borrowed (vv. 6-11). His address made the impression desired. The noble and wealthy resolved to perform what was required; whereupon Nehemiah caused them to take a solemn oath to this effect, indicating by a symbolical act that the heavy wrath of God would fall upon all who should fail to act according to their promise. To this the assembly expressed their Amen, and the people carried out the resolution (vv. 12, 13). Nehemiah then declared with what unselfishness he had exercised his office of governor, for the sake of lightening the heavy burden laid upon the people (vv. 14-19).

Neh. 5: 1-5. THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN OF OPPRESSION. — V. 1. There arose a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews, i.e., as appears from what follows (v. 7), against the nobles and rulers, therefore against the richer members of the community. This cry is more particularly stated in vv. 2-5, where the malcontents are divided into three classes by **רִישׁ**, vv. 2, 3, 4.

Neh. 5: 2. There were some who said: Our sons and our daughters are many, and we desire to receive corn, that we may eat and live. These were the words of those workers who had no property. **נִקְחָה** (from **לָקַח**), not to take by force, but only to desire that corn may be provided.

Neh. 5: 3. Others, who were indeed possessed of fields, vineyards, and houses, had been obliged to mortgage them, and could now reap nothing from them. **עָרַב**, to give as a pledge, to mortgage. The use of the participle denotes the continuance of the transaction, and is not to be rendered, We must mortgage our fields to procure corn; but, We have been obliged to mortgage them, and we desire to receive corn for our hunger, because of the dearth. For (1) the context shows that the act of mortgaging had already taken place, and was still continuing in force (we have been obliged to pledge them, and they are still pledged); and (2) **נִקְחָה** must not be taken here in a different sense from v. 2, but means, We desire that corn may be furnished us, because of the dearth; not, that we may not be obliged to mortgage our lands, but because they are already mortgaged. **בְּרָעַב**, too, does not necessarily presuppose a scarcity in consequence of a failure of crops or other circumstances, but only declares that they who had been obliged to pledge their fields were suffering from hunger.

Neh. 5: 4. Others, again, complained: We have borrowed money for the king's tribute upon our fields and vineyards. **לָנָה** means to be dependent, *nexum esse*, and transitively to make dependent, like **מָלֵא**, to be full, and to

make full: We have made our fields and our vineyards answerable for money for the king's tribute (Bertheau), i.e., we have borrowed money upon our fields for... This they could only do by pledging the crops of these lands, or at least such a portion of their crops as might equal the sum borrowed; comp. the law, Lev. 25:14-17.

Neh. 5: 5. “And now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, and our sons as their sons; and lo, we are obliged to bring our sons and our daughters into bondage, and some of our daughters are already brought into bondage; and we have no power to alter this, and our fields and vineyards belong to others.” “Our brethren” are the richer Jews who had lent money upon pledges, and **בְּנֵיהֶם** are their sons. The sense of the first half of the verse is: We are of one flesh and blood with these rich men, i.e., as Ramb. already correctly explains it: *non sumus deterioris conditionis quam tribules nostri divites, nec tamen nostrae inopiae ex lege divina Deu. 15: 7, 8, subvenitur, nisi maximo cum foenore.* The law not only allowed to lend to the poor on a pledge (Deu. 15: 8), but also permitted Israelites, if they were poor, to sell themselves (Lev. 25:39), and also their sons and daughters, to procure money. It required, however, that they who were thus sold should not be retained as slaves, but set at liberty without ransom, either after seven years or at the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:39-41; Exo. 22: 2f.). It is set forth as a special hardship in this verse that some of their daughters were brought into bondage for maid-servants. **אֵין לְאֵל יְדֵנוּ**, literally, our hand is not to God, i.e., the power to alter it is not in our hand; on this figure of speech, comp. Gen. 31:29. The last clause gives the reason: Our fields and our vineyards belonging to others, what they yield does not come to us, and we are not in a position to be able to put an end to the sad necessity of selling our daughters for servants.

Neh. 5: 6-13. THE ABOLITION OF USURY. — V. 6. Nehemiah was very angry at this complaint and these things, i.e., the injustice which had been brought to his knowledge.

Neh. 5: 7. “And my heart took counsel upon it (**מִלְּדָבָר**) according to the Chaldee use of **מִלְּדָבָר**, Dan. 4:24), and I contended with the nobles and rulers, and said to them, Ye exact usury every one of his brother.” **נָשָׂא בֶּ** means to lend to any one, and **מִשָּׂא**, also **מִשְׂאָה**, Deu. 24:10, Pro. 22:26, and **מִשָּׂא**, is the thing lent, the loan, what one borrows from or lends to another. Consequently **נָשָׂא מִשָּׂא** is to lend some one a loan; comp. Deu. 24:10. This does not seem to suit this verse. For Nehemiah cannot reproach the nobles for lending loans, when he and his servants had, according to v. 10, done so likewise. Hence the injustice of the transaction which he rebukes must be

expressed in the emphatic precedence given to **מִשָּׂא**. Bertheau accordingly regards **מִשָּׂא** not as the accusative of the object, but as an independent secondary accusative in the sense of: for the sake of demanding a pledge, ye lend. But this rendering can be neither grammatically nor lexically justified. In the first respect it is opposed by **הָשֵׂא מִשָּׂאָה**, Deu. 24:10, which shows that **מִשָּׂא** in conjunction with **נָשָׂא** is the accusative of the object; in the other, by the constant use of **מִשָּׂא** in all passages in which it occurs to express a loan, not a demand for a pledge. From Exo. 22:24, where it is said, “If thou lend money (תִּלְוֶה) to the poor, thou shalt not be to him **בַּנְּשֵׂה**, shalt not lay upon him usury,” it is evident that **נָשָׂא** is one who lends money on usury, or carries on the business of a money-lender. This evil secondary meaning of the word is here strongly marked by the emphatic preposition of **מִשָּׂא**; hence Nehemiah is speaking of those who practise usury. “And I appointed a great assembly on their account,” to put a stop to the usury and injustice by a public discussion of the matter. **עַל־יָהֶם**, not against them (the usurers), but on their account.

Neh. 5: 8. In this assembly he reproached them with the injustice of their behaviour. “We” (said he) “have, after our ability, redeemed our brethren the Jews which were sold unto the heathen; yet ye would sell your brethren, and they are to be sold to us.” *We* (i.e., Nehemiah and the Jews living in exile, who were like-minded with him) have bought, in contrast to *ye* sell. They had redeemed their Jewish brethren who were sold to the heathen. **בְּנֵי בְדֵי בְנוֹ אֲשֶׁר**, i.e., not according to the full number of those who were among us, meaning as often as a sale of this kind occurred (Bertheau); for **בְּ** does not mean completeness, multitude, but only sufficiency, supply, adequacy of means (Lev. 25:26); hence **בְּנֵי בְדֵי בְנוֹ** is: according to the means that we had: *secundum sufficientiam vel facultatem, quae in nobis est* (Ramb.), or *secundum possibilitatem nostram* (Vulg.). The contrast is still more strongly expressed by the placing of **גַּם** before **אֲהֵם**, so that **גַּם וְגַם** acquires the meaning of nevertheless (Ewald, § 354, *a*). The sale of their brethren for bond-servants was forbidden by the law, Lev. 25:42. The usurers had nothing to answer to this reproach. “They held their peace, and found no word,” sc. in justification of their proceedings.

Neh. 5: 9. Nehemiah, moreover, continued (**וַיֹּאמֶר**, the Chethiv, is evidently a clerical error for **וַיִּאָמַר**, for the Niphal **וַיִּאָמַר** does not suit): “The thing ye do is not good: ought ye not (= ye surely ought) to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?” i.e., we ought not, by harsh and unloving conduct towards our brethren, to give our enemies occasion to calumniate us.

Neh. 5:10. “I, likewise my brethren and my servants (comp. Neh. 4:17), have lent them money and corn; let us, I pray, remit (not ask back) this loan!” The participle **נָשִׂים** says: we are those who have lent. Herewith he connects the invitation, v. 11: “Restore unto them, I pray you, even this day (**בְּהַיּוֹם**, about this day, i.e., even to-day, 1Sa. 9:13), their fields, their vineyards, their olive gardens, and their houses, and the hundredth of the money, and of the corn, wine, and oil which you have lent them.” Nehemiah requires, *1st*, that those who held the lands of their poorer brethren in pledge should restore them their property without delay: *2nd*, that they should remit to their debtors all interest owing on money, corn, etc. that had been lent; not, as the words have been frequently understood, that they should give back to their debtors such interest as they had already received. That the words in v. 11a bear the former, and not the latter signification, is obvious from the reply, v. 12, of those addressed: “We will restore, sc. their lands, etc., and will not querie of them, sc. the hundredth; so will we do as thou sayest.” Hence we must not translate **אִתָּם נְשִׂים בָּהֶם** **אֲשֶׁר**, “which you had taken from them as interest” (de Wette), — a translation which, moreover, cannot be justified by the usage of the language, for **נָשָׂה בְּ** does not mean to take interest from another, to lend to another on interest. The **אֲשֶׁר** relates not to **וּמֵאֵת**, but to **וְהִצָּדֵק ... הִדָּגַן**; and **הִשִּׁיב**, to restore, to make good, is used of both the transactions in question, meaning in the first clause the restoration of the lands retained as pledges, and in the second, the remission (the non-requirement) of the hundredth. The hundredth taken as interest is probably, like the *centesima* of the Romans, to be understood of a monthly payment. One per cent. per month was a very heavy interest, and one which, in the case of the poor, might be exorbitant. The law, moreover, forbade the taking of any usury from their brethren, their poor fellow-countrymen, Exo. 22:25 and Lev. 25:36f. When the creditors had given the consent required, Nehemiah called the priests, and made them (the creditors) swear to do according to this promise, i.e., conscientiously to adhere to their agreement. Nehemiah obtained the attendance of the priests, partly for the purpose of giving solemnity to the oath now taken, and partly to give to the declaration made in the presence of the priests legal validity for judicial decisions.

Neh. 5:13. To make the agreement thus sworn to still more binding, Nehemiah confirmed the proceeding by a symbolical action: Also I shook my lap, and said, So may God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth (fulfilleth) not this promise, and thus may he be shaken out and emptied. **אֲפָן** means the lap of the garment, in which things are carried (Isa. 49:22), where alone the word is again found. The symbolical action consisted in Nehemiah’s gathering up his garment as if for the purpose of carrying something, and then shaking it out with the words above stated, which

declared the meaning of the act. The whole congregation said Amen, and praised the Lord, sc. for the success with which God had blessed his efforts to help the poor. And the people did according to this promise, i.e., the community acted in accordance with the agreement entered into.

Neh. 5:14-19. NEHEMIAH'S UNSELFISH CONDUCT. — The transaction above related gave Nehemiah occasion to speak in his narrative of the unselfishness with which he had filled the office of governor, and of the personal sacrifices he had made for the good of his fellow-countrymen.

Neh. 5:14. The statement following is compared with the special occurrence preceding it by **וְכֵן**. As in this occurrence he had used his credit to do away with the oppression of the people by wealthy usurers, so also had he shown himself unselfish during his whole official career, and shunned no sacrifice by which he might lighten the burdens that lay upon his fellow-countrymen. "From the time that he appointed me to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two-and-thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, I and my servants have not eaten the bread of the governor." The subject of **צִנְהָה** is left undefined, but is obviously King Artaxerxes. **מִפְּהָם**, their (the Jews') governor. This he was from the twentieth (comp. Neh. 2: 1) to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, in which, according to Neh. 13: 6, he again visited the court of this monarch, returning after a short interval to Jerusalem, to carry out still further the work he had there undertaken. "The bread of the Pechah" is, according to v. 15, the food and wine with which the community had to furnish him. The meaning is: During this whole period I drew no allowances from the people.

Neh. 5:15. The former governors who had been before me in Jerusalem — Zerubbabel and his successors — had received allowances, **הַכְּבִידוֹ עַל הָעָם**, had burdened the people, and had taken of them (their fellow-countrymen) for bread and wine (i.e., for the requirements of their table), "afterwards in money forty shekels." Some difficulty is presented by the word **אַחֵר**, which the LXX render by **ἕσχατον**, the Vulgate *quotidie*. The meaning *ultra, praeter*, besides (EW. § 217, 1), can no more be shown to be that of **אַחֵר**, than *over* can, which Bertheau attempts to justify by saying that after forty shekels follow forty-one, forty-two, etc. The interpretation, too: reckoned after money (Böttcher, *de Inferis*, § 409, *b*, and *N. krit. Aehrenl.* iii. p. 219), cannot be supported by the passages quoted in its behalf, since in none of them is **אַחֵר** used *de illo quod normae est*, but has everywhere fundamentally the local signification *after*. Why, then, should not **אַחֵר** be here used adverbially, *afterwards*, and express the thought that this money was afterwards demanded from the community for

the expenses of the governor's table? "Even their servants bare rule over the people." שָׁלַט denotes arbitrary, oppressive rule, abuse of power for extortions, etc. Nehemiah, on the contrary, had not thus acted because of the fear of God.

Neh. 5:16. "And also I took part in the work of this wall; neither bought we any land, and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work." הָחִיזִיק בְּ = הָחִיזִיק יָד בְּ, to set the hand to something; here, to set about the work. The manner in which Nehemiah, together with his servants, set themselves to the work of wall-building is seen from Neh. 4:10, 12, 15, and 17. Neither have we (I and my servants) bought any land, i.e., have not by the loan of money and corn acquired mortgages of land; comp. v. 10.

Neh. 5:17. But this was not all; for Nehemiah had also fed a considerable number of persons at his table, at his own expense. "And the Jews, both one hundred and fifty rulers, and the men who came to us from the nations round about us, were at my table," i.e., were my guests. The hundred and fifty rulers, comp. Neh. 2:16, were the heads of the different houses of Judah collectively. These were always guests at Nehemiah's table, as were also such Jews as dwelt among the surrounding nations, when they came to Jerusalem.

Neh. 5:18. "And that which was prepared for one (i.e., a single) day was one ox, six choice (therefore fat) sheep, and fowls; they were prepared for me, i.e., at my expense, and once in ten days a quantity of wine of all kinds." The meaning of the last clause seems to be, that the wine was furnished every ten days; no certain quantity, however, is mentioned, but it is only designated in general terms as very great, וְעַם זֶה לְהַרְבֵּה, and with this, i.e., notwithstanding this, great expenditure, I did not require the bread of the Pechah (the allowance for the governor, comp. v. 14), for the service was heavy upon the people. הָעֲבֹדָה is the service of building the walls of Jerusalem. Thus Nehemiah, from compassion for his heavily burdened countrymen, resigned the allowance to which as governor he was entitled.

Neh. 5:19. "Think upon me, my God, for good, all that I have done for this people." Compare the repetition of this desire, Neh. 13:14 and 31. עָשָׂה עָלַי in the sense of עָשָׂה לִי, for the sake of this people, i.e., for them.

Ch. 6. — Snares Laid for Nehemiah — Completion of the Wall.

Neh. 6. When Sanballat and the enemies associated with him were unable to obstruct the building of the wall of Jerusalem by Open violence (Neh. 4), they endeavoured to ruin Nehemiah by secret snares. They invited him to meet them in the plain of Ono (vv. 1, 2); but Nehemiah, perceiving that they intended

mischief, replied to them by messengers, that he could not come to them on account of the building. After receiving for the fourth time this refusal, Sanballat sent his servant to Nehemiah with an open letter, in which he accused him of rebellion against the king of Persia. Nehemiah, however, repelled this accusation as the invention of Sanballat (vv. 3-9). Tobiah and Sanballat, moreover, hired a false prophet to make Nehemiah flee into the temple from fear of the snares prepared for him, that they might then be able to calumniate him (10-14). The building of the wall was completed in fifty-two days, and the enemies were disheartened (15-17), although at that time many nobles of Judah had entered into epistolary correspondence with Tobiah, to obstruct the proceedings of Nehemiah (18, 19).

Neh. 6: 1-9. THE ATTEMPTS OF SANBALLAT AND HIS ASSOCIATES TO RUIN NEHEMIAH. — Vv. 1, 2. When Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of the enemies, heard that the wall was built, and that no breaches were left therein, though the doors were then not yet set up in the gates, he sent, etc. לָשָׁמַע, it was heard by him, in the indefinite sense of: it came to his ears. The use of the passive is more frequent in later Hebrew; comp. vv. 6, 7, 13:27, Est. 1:20, and elsewhere. On Sanballat and his allies, see remarks on Neh. 2:19. The “rest of our enemies” were, according to Neh. 4: 1 (Neh. 4: 7, A.V.), Ashdodites, and also other hostile individuals. גַּם עַד הָעֵת וּגְרֵי introduces a parenthetical sentence limiting the statement already made: Nevertheless, down to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates. The wall-building was quite finished, but doors to the gates were as yet wanting to the complete fortification of the city. The enemies sent to him, saying, Come, let us meet together (for a discussion) in the villages in the valley of Ono. — In v. 7, נְוֶעֲדָה of the present verse. The form כְּפָרִים, elsewhere only כְּפָר, 1Ch. 27:25, or כְּפָר, village, 1Sa. 6:18, occurs only here. כְּפִירָה, however, being found Ezr. 2:25 and elsewhere as a proper name, the form כְּפִיר seems to have been in use as well as כְּפָר. There is no valid ground for regarding כְּפָרִים as the proper name of a special locality. To make their proposal appear impartial, they leave the appointment of the place in the valley of Ono to Nehemiah. Ono seems, according to 1Ch. 8:12, to have been situate in the neighbourhood of Lod (Lydda), and is therefore identified by Van de Velde (*Mem.* p. 337) and Bertheau with Kefr Ana (Arab. *kfr* {*âna*) or Kefr Anna, one and three-quarter leagues north of Ludd. But no certain information concerning the position of the place can be obtained from 1Ch. 8:12; and Roediger (in the *Hallische Lit. Zeitung*, 1842, No. 71, p. 665) is more correct, in accordance both with the orthography and the sense, in comparing it with Beit Unia (Arab. *byt ûniya*), north-west of Jerusalem, not far from Beitin (Bethel); comp. Rob. *Pal.* ii. p. 351. The circumstance that the plain of Ono was, according to the present

verse, somewhere between Jerusalem and Samaria, which suits Beit Unia, but not Kefr Ana (comp. Arnold in Herzog's *Realenc.* xii. p. 759), is also in favour of the latter view. "But they thought to do me harm." Probably they wanted to make him a prisoner, perhaps even to assassinate him.

Neh. 6: 3. Nehemiah sent messengers to them, saying: "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down thither. Why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?" That is, he let them know that he could not undertake the journey, because his presence in Jerusalem was necessary for the uninterrupted prosecution of the work of building.

Neh. 6: 4. They sent to him four times in the same manner (בְּדָבָר הַזֶּה), comp. 2Sa. 15: 6), and Nehemiah gave them the same answer.

Neh. 6: 5. Then Sanballat sent his servant in this manner, the fifth time, with an open letter, in which was written: "It is reported (נִשְׁמָע), it is heard) among the nations, and Gashmu saith, (that) thou and the Jews intend to rebel; for which cause thou buildest the wall, and thou wilt be their king, according to these words." "The nations" are naturally the nations dwelling in the land, in the neighbourhood of the Jewish community. On the form Gashmu, comp. rem. on Neh. 2:19. הָוָה, the particip., is used of that which any one intends or prepares to do: thou art intending to become their king. עַל־כֵּן, therefore, for no other reason than to rebel, dost thou build the wall.

Neh. 6: 7. It was further said in the letter: "Thou hast also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning thee in Jerusalem, saying, King of Judah; and now it will be reported to the king according to these words (or things). Come, therefore, and let us take counsel together," sc. to refute these things as groundless rumours. By such accusations in an open letter, which might be read by any one, Sanballat thought to oblige Nehemiah to come and clear himself from suspicion by an interview.

Neh. 6: 9. Nehemiah, however, saw through his stratagem, and sent word to him by a messenger: "There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart." בּוֹדָאִים, a contraction of בּוֹדָאִים, from בְּדָא, which occurs again only in 1Ki. 12:33, to invent, to feign, especially evil things.

Neh. 6: 9. "For," adds Nehemiah when writing of these things, "they all desired to make us afraid, thinking (לְאָמַר) their hands will cease from the work, that it be not done." The last words, "And now strengthen my hands," are to be explained by the fact that Nehemiah hastily transports himself into the

situation and feelings of those days when he prayed to God for strength. To make this request fit into the train of thought, we must supply: I however thought, or said, Strengthen, O God, my hands. **יָזַק** is imperative. The translation, in the first pers. sing. of the imperfect, “I strengthened” (LXX, Vulg., Syr.), is only an attempt to fit into their context words not understood by the translators.

Neh. 6:10-14. A false prophet, hired by Tobiah and Sanballat, also sought, by prophesying that the enemies of Nehemiah would kill him in the night, to cause him to flee with him into the holy place of the temple, and to protect his life from the machinations of his enemies by closing the temple doors. His purpose was, as Nehemiah subsequently learned, to seduce him into taking an illegal step, and so give occasion for speaking evil of him.

Neh. 6:10. “And I came into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up.” Nothing further is known of this prophet Shemaiah. From what is here related we learn, that he was one of the lying prophets employed by Sanballat and Tobiah to ruin Nehemiah. We are not told what induced or caused Nehemiah to go into the house of Shemaiah; he merely recounts what the latter was hired by his enemies to effect. From the accessory clause, “and he was shut up,” we may perhaps infer that Shemaiah in some way or other, perhaps by announcing that he had something of importance to communicate, persuaded Nehemiah to visit him at his house. **וְהוּא עָצוּר** does not, however, involved the meaning which Bertheau gives it, viz., that Nehemiah went to Shemaiah’s house, because the latter as **עָצוּר** could not come to him. The phrase says only, that when Nehemiah entered Shemaiah’s house, he found him **עָצוּר**, which simply means shut up, shut in his house, not imprisoned, and still less in a state of ceremonial uncleanness (Ewald), or overpowered by the hand of Jahve — laid hold on by a higher power (Bertheau). It is evident from his proposal to Nehemiah, “Let us go together to the house of God,” etc., that he was neither imprisoned in his house, nor prevented by any physical cause from leaving home. Hence it follows that he had shut himself in his house, to intimate to Nehemiah that also he felt his life in danger through the machinations of his enemies, and that he was thus dissimulating in order the more easily to induce him to agree to his proposal, that they should together escape the snares laid for them by fleeing to the temple. In this case, it may be uncertain whether Shemaiah had shut himself up, feigning that the enemies of Judah were seeking his life also, as the prophet of Jahve; or whether by this action he was symbolically announcing what God charged him to make known to Nehemiah. Either view is possible; while the circumstance that Nehemiah in v. 12 calls his advice to flee into the temple a

בְּבוֹאָה against him, and that it was quite in character with the proceedings of such false prophets to enforce their words by symbolical signs (comp. 1Ki. 22:11), favours the former. The going into the house of God is more closely defined by אֶל-תּוֹךְ הַהֵיכָל, within the holy place; for they (the enemies) will come to slay thee, and indeed this night will they come to slay thee.” He seeks to corroborate his warning as a special revelation from God, by making it appear that God had not only made known to him the design of the enemies, but also the precise time at which they intended to carry it into execution.

Neh. 6:11. Nehemiah, however, was not to be alarmed thereby, but exclaimed: Should such a man as I flee? and what man like me could go into the holy place and live? I will not go in. וַיְחִי is the perf. with *Vav* consecutive: that he may live. This word is ambiguous; it may mean: to save his life, or: and save his life, not, expiate such a transgression of the law with his life. Probably Nehemiah used it in the latter sense, having in mind the command, Num. 18: 7, that the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Neh. 6:12. And I perceived, — viz. from the conduct of Shemaiah on my refusal to follow his advice, — and, lo, not God had sent him (i.e., had not commissioned or inspired him to speak these words; לֹא emphatically precedes אֱלֹהִים: not God, but himself), but that he pronounced this prophecy against me, because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. The verb שָׁכְרוּ (sing.) agrees only with the latter word, although in fact it refers to both these individuals.

Neh. 6:13. “On this account was he hired that I might be afraid, and do so; and if I had sinned (by entering the holy place), it (my sin) would have been to them for an evil report, that they might defame me.” The use of לְמַעַן before two sentences, the second of which expresses the purpose of the first, is peculiar: for this purpose, that I might fear, etc., was he hired. To enter and to shut himself within the holy place would have been a grave desecration of the house of God, which would have given occasion to his enemies to cast suspicion upon Nehemiah as a despiser of God’s commands, and so to undermine his authority with the people. — In v. 14 Nehemiah concludes his account of the stratagems of his enemies, with the wish that God would think upon them according to their works. In expressing it, he names, besides Tobiah and Sanballat, the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who, like Shemaiah, would have put him in fear: whence we perceive, *1st*, that the case related (vv. 10-13) is given as only one of the chief events of the kind (מִן-רָאִים, like vv. 9, 19); and *2nd*, that false prophets were again busy in the congregation, as in the period preceding the captivity, and seeking to seduce the

people from hearkening to the voice of the true prophets of God, who preached repentance and conversation as the conditions of prosperity.

Neh. 6:15, 16. THE WALL COMPLETED, AND THE IMPRESSION MADE BY THIS WORK UPON THE ENEMIES OF THE JEWS. — V. 15. The wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, i.e., of the sixth month, in fifty-two days. According to this statement, it must have been begun on the third day of the fifth month (Ab). The year is not mentioned, the before-named (Neh. 2: 1) twentieth year of Artaxerxes being intended. This agrees with the other chronological statements of this book. For, according to Neh. 2: 1, it was in Nisan (the first month) of this year that Nehemiah entreated permission of the king to go to Jerusalem; and we learn from Neh. 5:14 and 13: 6 that he was governor in Jerusalem from the twentieth year onwards, and must therefore have set out for that place immediately after receiving the royal permission. In this case, he might well arrive in Jerusalem before the expiration of the fourth month. He then surveyed the wall, and called a public assembly for the purpose of urging the whole community to enter heartily upon the work of restoration (Neh. 2:11-17). All this might take place in the course of the fourth month, so that the work could be actually taken in hand in the fifth. Nor is there any reasonable ground, as Bertheau has already shown, for doubting the correctness of the statement, that the building was completed in fifty-two days, and (with Ewald) altering the fifty-two days into two years and four months. ^{fi1}

For we must in this case consider, *1st*, the necessity for hastening the work repeatedly pointed out by Nehemiah; *2nd*, the zeal and relatively very large number of builders — the whole community, both the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Jericho, Tekoa, Gibeon, Mizpah, etc. having combined their efforts; *3rd*, that the kind of exertion demanded by such laborious work and unintermitted watchfulness as are described Neh. 4, though it might be continued for fifty-two days, could scarcely endure during a longer period; and lastly, the amount of the work itself, which must not be regarded as the rebuilding of the whole wall, but only as the restoration of those portions that had been destroyed, the repair of the breaches (Neh. 1: 3, 2:13, 6: 1), and of the ruined gates, — a large portion of wall and at least one gate having remained uninjured see p. 33f.). To this must be added that the material, so far as stone was concerned, was close at hand, stone needing for the most part to be merely brought out of the ruins; besides which, materials of all kind might have been collected and prepared beforehand. It is, moreover, incorrect to compute the extent of this fortified wall by the extent of the wall of modern Jerusalem.

Neh. 6:16. The news that the wall was finished spread fear among the enemies, viz., among the nations in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem (comp. Neh. 4: 1, 5: 9); they were much cast down, and perceived “that this work was

effected with the help of our God.” The expression **יָפְלוּ בְעֵינֵיהֶם** occurs only here, and must be explained according to **יָפְלוּ פָנָיו**, his countenance fell (Gen. 4: 5), and **יָפַל לֵב**, the heart fails (i.e., the courage) (1Sa. 17:32): they sank in their own eyes, i.e., they felt themselves cast down, discouraged.

Neh. 6:17-19. To this Nehemiah adds the supplementary remark, that in those days even nobles of Judah were in alliance and active correspondence with Tobiah, because he had married into a respectable Jewish family.

Neh. 6:17. “Also in those days the nobles of Judah wrote many letters (**מְרַבִּים אֲנֵרְתֵיהֶם**, they made many, multiplied, their letters) passing to Tobiah, and those of Tobiah came to them.”

Neh. 6:18. For many in Judah were sworn unto him, for he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken (to wife) the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. In this case Tobiah was connected with two Jewish families, — a statement which is made to confirm the fact that many in Judah were **בְּעֵלֵי שְׁבוּעָה**, associates of an oath, joined to him by an oath, not allies in consequence of a treaty sworn to (Bertheau). From this reason being given, we may conclude his affinity by marriage was confirmed by an oath. Shecaniah ben Arah was certainly a respectable Jew of the race of Arah, Ezr. 2: 5. Meshullam ben Berechiah appears among those who shared in the work of building, Neh. 3: 4 and 30. According to Neh. 13: 4, the high priest Eliashib was also related to Tobiah. From the fact that both Tobiah and his son Jehohanan have genuine Jewish names, Bertheau rightly infers that they were probably descended from Israelites of the northern kingdom of the ten tribes. With this the designation of Tobiah as “the Ammonite” may be harmonized by the supposition that his more recent or remote ancestors were naturalized Ammonites.

Neh. 6:19. “Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him.” **טוֹבוֹתָיו**, the good things in him, or “his good qualities and intentions” (Bertheau). The subject of the sentence is the nobles of Judah. **לוֹ מוֹצִיִּים**, they were bringing forth to him. On this matter Bertheau remarks, that there is no reason for assuming that the nobles of Judah endeavoured, by misrepresenting and distorting the words of Nehemiah, to widen the breach between him and Tobiah. This is certainly true; but, at the same time, we cannot further infer from these words that they were trying to effect an understanding between the two, and representing to Nehemiah how dangerous and objectionable his undertaking was; but were by this very course playing into the hands of Tobiah. For an understanding between two individuals, hostile the one to the other, is not to be brought about by reporting to the one what is the

other's opinion of him. Finally, Nehemiah mentions also that Tobiah also sent letters to put him in fear (נִשְׁרָרָה, infin. Piel, like 2Ch. 32:18; comp. the participle above, vv. 9 and 14). The letters were probably of similar contents with the letter of Sanballat given in v. 6.

II. Nehemiah's Further Exertions in Behalf of the Community. — Ch. 7-12:43.

Neh. 7: 1-12:43. The building of the wall being now concluded, Nehemiah first made arrangements for securing the city against hostile attacks (Neh. 7: 1-3); then took measures to increase the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Neh. 7: 4-73 and Neh. 11: 1 and 2); and finally endeavoured to fashion domestic and civil life according to the precepts of the law (Neh. 8-10), and, on the occasion of the solemn dedication of the wall, to set in order the services of the Levites (Neh. 12).

Ch. 7. — The Watching of the City. Measures to Increase the Number of its Inhabitants. List of the Houses that Returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel.

Neh. 7: 1-3. THE WATCHING OF THE CITY PROVIDED FOR. — V. 1. When the wall was built, Nehemiah set up the doors in the gates, to complete the fortification of Jerusalem (comp. Neh. 6: 1). Then were the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites entrusted with the care (הִפְקִידָה, *praefici*; comp. Neh. 12:14). The care of watching the walls and gates is meant in this connection. According to ancient appointment, it was the duty of the doorkeepers to keep watch over the house of God, and to open and close the gates of the temple courts; comp. 1Ch. 9:17-19, 26:12-19. The singers and the Levites appointed to assist the priests, on the contrary, had, in ordinary times, nothing to do with the service of watching. Under the present extraordinary circumstances, however, Nehemiah committed also to these two organized corporations the task of keeping watch over the walls and gates of the city, and placed them under the command of his brother Hanani, and of Hananiah the ruler of the citadel. This is expressed by the words, v. 2: I gave Hanani...and Hananiah...charge over Jerusalem. הַבֵּיָרָה is the fortress or citadel of the city lying to the north of the temple (see rem. on Neh. 2: 8), in which was probably located the royal garrison, the commander of which was in the service of the Persian king. The choice of this man for so important a charge is explained by the additional clause: "for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many." The כִּי before אִישׁ is the so-called Caph *veritatis*, which expresses a comparison

with the idea of the matter: like a man whom one may truly call faithful. מְרַבִּים is comparative: more God-fearing than many.

Neh. 7: 3. The Chethiv וַיֹּאמֶר is both here and Neh. 5: 9 certainly a clerical error for the Keri וַיֹּאמְרוּ, though in this place, at all events, we might read וַיֹּאמֶר, it was said to them. “The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened till the sun be hot; and while they (the watch) are yet at their posts, they are to shut the doors and lock them; and ye shall appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some to be at their watch-posts, others before their house.” יְגִיפוּ in Hebrew is used only here, though more frequently in the Talmud, of closing the doors. שָׁחָה, to make fast, i.e., to lock, as more frequently in Syriac. The *infin. absol.* הַעֲמִיד instead of the *temp. fin.* is emphatic: and you are to appoint. The sense is: the gates are to be occupied before daybreak by the Levites (singers and other Levites) appointed to guard them, and not opened till the sun is hot and the watch already at their posts, and to be closed in the evening before the departure of the watch. After the closing of the gates, i.e., during the night, the inhabitants of Jerusalem are to keep watch for the purpose of defending the city from any kind of attack, a part occupying the posts, and the other part watching before their (each before his own) house, so as to be at hand to defend the city.

Neh. 7: 4-73a. THE MEASURES TAKEN BY NEHEMIAH FOR INCREASING THE NUMBER OF THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM. — V. 4. The city was spacious and great, and the people few therein, and houses were not built. רַחְבֵּת יָדָיִם, broads on both sides, that is, regarded from the centre towards either the right or left hand. The last clause does not say that there were no houses at all, for the city had been re-inhabited for ninety years; but only that houses had not been built in proportion to the size of the city, that there was still much unoccupied space on which houses might be built.

Neh. 7: 5. And God put into my heart, i.e., God inspired me with the resolution; comp. Neh. 2:12. What resolution, is declared by the sentences following, which detail its execution. The resolution to gather together the nobles and rulers of the people for the purpose of making a list of their kinsmen, and thus to obtain a basis for the operations contemplated for increasing the inhabitants of Jerusalem. הַחֲרִים וְהַסְּגִינִים are combined, as in Neh. 2:16. On הַתִּנְחָשׁ, comp. 1Ch. 5:17.

While this resolve was under consideration, Nehemiah found the register, i.e., the genealogical registry, of those who came up at first (from Babylon). בְּרֵאשִׁוּנָה, at the beginning, i.e., with Zerubbabel and Joshua under Cyrus (Ezr. 2), and not subsequently with Ezra (Ezr. 7). “And I found written

therein.” These words introduce the list now given. This list, vv. 6-73a, is identical with that in Ezr. 2, and has been already discussed in our remarks on that chapter.

Ch. 8-10. — Public Reading of the Law. — The Feast of Tabernacles. A Public Fast Held, and a Covenant Made to Keep the Law.

Neh. 8-10. These three chapters form a connected whole, and describe acts of worship and solemnities conducted by Ezra and other priests and Levites, Nehemiah as the secular governor being only twice mentioned in them (Neh. 8: 9, 10: 2). The contents of the three chapters are as follows: On the approach of the seventh month, which opened with the feast of trumpets, and during which occurred both the feast of tabernacles and the great day of atonement, the people were gathered to Jerusalem; and Ezra, at the request of the congregation, read to the assembled people out of the book of the law on the first and second days. It being found written in the law, that the Israelites were to dwell in booths during the seventh month, it was resolved to keep the festival in accordance with this direction; and this resolution was carried into execution by erecting booths made with branches of trees on housetops, in courts, and in the public places of the city, and celebrating the seven-days’ festival by a daily public reading of the law (Neh. 8). On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the congregation again assembled, with fasting and mourning, to make a public confession of their sins, and to renew their covenant with God (Neh. 9, 10).

The second clause of Neh. 7:73 belongs to Neh. 8, and forms one sentence with 8: 1. “When the seventh month came, and the children of Israel were in their cities, the whole people gathered themselves together as one man in the open space that was before the water-gate,” etc. The capitular division of the Masoretic text is erroneous, and makes the words, “and the children of Israel were in their cities,” appear a mere repetition of the sentence, “and all Israel dwelt in their cities.” The chronological statement, “when the seventh month came,” without mention of the year, points back to the date in 6:15: the twenty-fifth Elul, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes; on which day the building of the wall was completed. Elul, the sixth month, is followed by Tishri, the seventh, and there is nothing against the inference that the seventh month of the same year is intended; the dedication of the wall not being related till Neh. 12, and therefore occurring subsequently, while all the facts narrated in Neh. 8-11 might, without any difficulty, occur in the interval between the completion of the wall and its dedication. For, besides the public reading of the law on the first two days of the seventh month, the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, and the public fast on the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month (Neh. 8-11), nothing more is recorded (Neh. 11: 1, 2) than the execution of the resolve made

by Nehemiah, immediately after the completion of the wall (Neh. 7: 4), viz., to increase the inhabitants of Jerusalem, by appointing by lot one of every ten dwellers in the surrounding country to go to Jerusalem and dwell there. This is succeeded by lists of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the cities of Benjamin and Judah, and lists of the priests and Levites (Neh. 11: 3-12:26):

Neh. 8: 1-8. THE PUBLIC READING OF THE LAW. — Vv. 1-3. The introduction to this narrative (Neh. 7:73b -8: 1a) is identical with Ezzr. 3: 1. The same matter, the assembling of the people on the approach of the seventh month, is described in the same words. But the object of this assembling of the people was a different one from that mentioned in Ezzr. 3. Then they met to restore the altar of burnt-offering and the sacrificial worship; now, on the contrary, for the due solemnization of the seventh month, the festal month of the year. For this purpose the people came from the cities and villages of Judah to Jerusalem, and assembled “in the open space before the water-gate,” i.e., to the south-east of the temple space. On the situation of the water-gate, see rem. on Neh. 3:26, 12:37f., and Ezzr. 10: 9. “And they spake unto Ezra the scribe” (see rem. on Ezzr. 7:11). The subject of **וַיִּאָמְרוּ** is the assembled people. These requested, through their rulers, that Ezra should fetch the book of the law of Moses, and publicly read it. This reading, then, was desired by the assembly. The motive for this request is undoubtedly to be found in the desire of the congregation to keep the new moon of the seventh month, as a feast of thanksgiving for the gracious assistance they had received from the Lord during the building of the wall, and through which it had been speedily and successfully completed, in spite of the attempts of their enemies to obstruct the work. This feeling of thankfulness impelled them to the hearing of the word of God for the purpose of making His law their rule of life. The assembly consisted of men and women indiscriminately (**אִישׁ וְעַד אִשָּׁה**, like Jos. 6:21, 8:25, 1Sa. 22:19, 1Ch. 16: 3), and **כָּל מִבֵּין לְשָׁמַע**, every one that understood in hearing, which would certainly include the elder children. The first day of the seventh month was distinguished above the other new moons of the year as the feast of trumpets, and celebrated as a high festival by a solemn assembly and a cessation from labour; comp. Lev. 23:23-25, Num. 29: 1-6.

Neh. 8: 3. Ezra read out of the law “from the light (i.e., from early morning) till mid-day;” therefore for about six hours. Not, however, as is obvious from the more particular description vv. 4-8, without cessation, but in such wise that the reading went on alternately with instructive lectures on the law from the Levites. “And the ears of all the people were directed to the law,” i.e., the people listened attentively. **הַמְבִינִים** must be understood according to **לְשָׁמַע**

כל מבין of v. 2. In vv. 4-8 the proceedings at this reading are more nearly described.

Neh. 8: 4. Ezra stood upon a raised stage of wood which had been made for the purpose (לדבר, for the matter). מגדל, usually a tower, here a high scaffold, a pulpit. Beside him stood six persons, probably priests, on his right, and seven on his left hand. In 1 Esdras, seven are mentioned as standing on his left hand also, the name Azariah being inserted between Anaiah and Urijah. It is likely that this name has been omitted from the Hebrew text, since it is improbable that there was one person less on his right than on his left hand. “Perhaps Urijah is the father of the Meremoth of Neh. 3: 4, 21; Maaseiah, the father of the Azariah of Neh. 3:23; Pedaiah, the individual named Neh. 3:21; the Azariah to be inserted, according to 1 Esdras, the same named Neh. 3:23; a Meshullam occurs, Neh. 3: 4, 6; and a Malchiah, 3:11, 14, 31” (Bertheau).

Neh. 8: 5. Ezra, standing on the raised platform, was above the assembled people (he was מעל כל־העם). When he opened the book, it was “in the sight of all the people,” so that all could see his action; and “all the people stood up” (עמדו). It cannot be shown from the O.T. that it had been from the days of Moses a custom with the Israelites to stand at the reading of the law, as the Rabbis assert; comp. Vitringa, *de Synag. vet.* p. 167.

Neh. 8: 6. Ezra began by blessing the Lord, the great God, perhaps with a sentence of thanksgiving, as David did, 1Ch. 29:10, but scarcely by using a whole psalm, as in 1Ch. 16: 8f. To this thanksgiving the people answered Amen, Amen (comp. 1Ch. 16:36), lifting up their hands (במעל ידיהם, with lifting up of their hands; the form מעל occurring only here), and worshipping the Lord, bowing down towards the ground.

Neh. 8: 7. And Jeshua, Bani, etc., the Levites, expounded the law to the people (הבינו, to cause to understand, here to instruct, by expounding the law). The ו copulative before הלויים must certainly have been inserted in the text by a clerical error; for the previously named thirteen (or fourteen) persons are Levites, of whom Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, and Hodijah occur again, 9: 4, 5. The names Jeshua, Sherebiah, Shabtai, and Jozabad are also met with 12:14, 11:16, but belong in these latter passages to other individuals who were heads of classes of Levites.

Neh. 8: 8. “And they (the Levites) read in (out of) the book of the law of God, explained and gave the sense; and they (the assembled auditors) were attentive to the reading.” The Rabbis understand מפרש = the Chaldee מפרש, of a rendering of the law into the vulgar tongue, i.e., a paraphrase in the

Chaldee language for those who were not acquainted with the ancient Hebrew. But this cannot be shown to be the meaning of פִּרְשׁ, this word being used in the Targums for the Hebrew נִקְבַּ (קִבְבּ), e.g., Lev. 24:16, and for בִּאֵר, Deu. 1: 5. It is more correct to suppose a paraphrastic exposition and application of the law (Pfeiffer, *dubia vex.* p. 480), but not “a distinct recitation according to appointed rules” (Gusset. and Bertheau). שׁוֹם is *infin. abs.* instead of the *temp. finit.*: and gave the sense, made the law comprehensible to the hearers. וַיְבִינּוּ בַמִּקְרָא, not with older interpreters, Luther (“so that what was read was understood”), and de Wette, “and they (the Levites) made what was read comprehensible,” which would be a mere tautology, but with the LXX, Vulgate, and others, “and they (the hearers) attended to the reading,” or, “obtained an understanding of what was read” (הִבִּין בְּ, like v. 12, Dan. 9:23, 10:11). Vitringa (*de syn. vet.* p. 420) already gives the correct meaning: *de doctoribus narratur, quod legerint et dederint intellectum, de auditoribus, quod lectum intellexerint*. The manner of proceeding with this reading is not quite clear. According to vv. 5-8, the Levites alone seem to have read to the people out of the book of the law, and to have explained what they read to their auditors; while according to v. 3, Ezra read to the assembled people, and the ears of all were attentive to the book of the law, while we are told in v. 5 that Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people. If, however, we regard vv. 4-8 as only a more detailed description of what is related vv. 2, 3, it is obvious that both Ezra and the thirteen Levites mentioned in v. 7 read out of the law. Hence the occurrence may well have taken place as follows: Ezra first read a section of the law, and the Levites then expounded to the people the portion just read; the only point still doubtful being whether the thirteen (fourteen) Levites expounded in succession, or whether they all did this at the same time to different groups of people.

Neh. 8: 9-12. THE CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF THE NEW MOON. — V. 9. Then Nehemiah, the Tirshatha (see remarks on Ezr. 2:63), and the priest Ezra the scribe, and the Levites who were teaching the people, said to all the people, “This day is holy to the Lord our God. Mourn not, nor weep; for all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.” הַיּוֹם is the new moon of the seventh month. The portion read made a powerful impression upon the assembled crowds. Undoubtedly it consisted of certain sections of Deuteronomy and other parts of the Torah, which were adapted to convict the people of their sin in transgressing the commands of the Lord, and of the punishments to which they had thus exposed themselves. They were so moved thereby that they mourned and wept. This induced Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites, who had been applying what was read to the hearts of their hearers, to encourage them.

Neh. 8:10. And he said to them (viz., Nehemiah as governor and head of the community, though the fact that his address is mentioned does not exclude the participation of Ezra and the Levites): “Go, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send gifts to them for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for joy in Jahve is your refuge.” מִשְׁמָנִים, fatnesses (λιπάσματα, LXX), fat pieces of meat, not “rich cakes” (Bertheau); comp. מִשְׁתֵּה שְׁמָנִים, Isa. 25: 6. מִמְתַּקִּים, sweetened drinks. The sense is: Make glad repasts on good feast-day food and drink; and send portions to the poor who have prepared nothing, that they too may rejoice on this festival. מְנוּחָה, gifts, are portions of food; Est. 9:19, 22; 1Sa. 1: 4. Hence we see that it was customary with the Israelites to send portions of food and drink, on festivals, to the houses of the poor, that they too might share in the joy of the day. נָכוֹן לְאִין for לְאִשֶׁר אֵין נָכוֹן (see rem. on 1Ch. 15:12), to them for whom nothing is prepared, who have not the means to prepare a feast-day meal. Because the day is holy to the Lord, they are to desire it with holy joy. חֶדְוַת יְהוָה is a joy founded on the feeling of communion with the Lord, on the consciousness that we have in the Lord a God long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth (Exo. 34: 6). This joy is to be to them מַעוּז, a strong citadel or refuge, because the Almighty is their God; comp. Jer. 16:19.

Neh. 8:11. The Levites also strove to pacify the people, saying: “Hold your peace, i.e., give over weeping, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.”

Neh. 8:12. This address had its effect. The people went their way, some to their houses, some to their lodgings, to partake of festal repasts, and to keep the feast with joy; “for they gave heed to the words that were declared to them,” i.e., they took to heart the address of Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites.

Neh. 8:13-18. CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. — V. 13. On the second day were gathered together the heads of the houses of all the people, of the priests, and of the Levites to Ezra the scribe, to attend to the words of the law. The infinitive לְהִשְׁבִּיל may indeed be taken (as by Bertheau) as the continuation of the finite verb, instead of as infinitive absolute (Ewald, § 352, c); this is, however, admissible only in cases where the second verb either states what must be done, or further describes the condition of affairs, while לְהִשְׁבִּיל here states the purpose for which the heads of the people, etc. assembled themselves unto Ezra. Hence we take לְהִשְׁבִּיל in its usual meaning, and the ו before it as explicative. הִשְׁבִּיל אֵל, as in Psa. 41: 1, expresses taking an attentive interest in anything. They desired to be further and more deeply instructed in the law by Ezra.

Neh. 8:14, 15. And they found written in the law that the Lord had commanded Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month; and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying: “Go forth to the mount, and fetch olive branches, etc. to make booths, as it is written.” This statement is not to be understood as saying that the heads of the people sought in the law, fourteen days before the feast, for information as to what they would have to do, that they might prepare for the due celebration of the feast of tabernacles (Bertheau). The text only states that the heads of the people again betook themselves to Ezra on the second day, to receive from him instruction in the law, and that in reading the law they found the precept concerning the celebration of the festival in booths, i.e., they met with this precept, and were thereby induced to celebrate the approaching festival in strict accordance with its directions. The law concerning the feast of tabernacles, of which the essentials are here communicated, is found Lev. 23:39-43. In Deu. 16:13 they were only commanded to keep the feast with gladness. The particular of dwelling in booths or bowers is taken from Lev. 23:43; the further details in v. 15 relate to the carrying out of the direction: “He shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook” (Lev. 23:43). Go to the mountain, a woody district, whence branches may be obtained. **עֲלֵי**, state constructive plural of **עֵלָה**, leaf, foliage, here leafy boughs or branches of trees. **זֵיתָה**, the olive, **שֶׁמֶן עֵץ**, the wild olive (oleaster), the myrtle, the palm, and branches of thick-leaved trees, are here mentioned (the two latter being also named in Leviticus). **בְּכִתוּב** does not relate to the preparation of the booths, but to the precept that the feast should be kept in booths. In v. 16 the accomplishment of the matter is related, presupposing a compliance with the proclamation sent out into all the cities in the land, and indeed so speedy a compliance that the booths were finished by the day of the feast. The object (the branches of v. 15) must be supplied to **וַיַּבְיֵאוּ** from the context. They made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the open space at the water-gate (see on v. 3), and the open space at the gate of Ephraim. On the situation of this gate, see rem. on 3: 8, p. 134. The open space before it must be thought of as within the city walls. On these two public places, booths were probably made by those who had come to Jerusalem, but did not dwell there; while the priests and Levites belonging to other places would build theirs in the courts of the temple.

Neh. 8:17. And the whole community that had returned from captivity (comp. Ezz. 6:21) made themselves booths and dwelt in booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day, had not the children of Israel done so. **בָּנִי**,

so, refers to the dwelling in booths; and the words do not tell us that the Israelites had not celebrated this festival since the days of Joshua, that is, since they had taken possession of Canaan: for, according to Ezr. 3: 4, those who returned from captivity kept this feast in the first year of their return; and a celebration is also mentioned after the dedication of Solomon's temple, 2Ch. 7: 9, 1Ki. 8:65. The text only states that since the days of Joshua the whole community had not *so* celebrated it, i.e., had not dwelt in booths. Neither do the words imply that since the days of Joshua to that time no booths at all had been made at the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, but only that this had not been done by the whole congregation. On former occasions, those who came up to Jerusalem may have regarded this precept as non-essential, and contented themselves by keeping the feast with solemn assemblies, sacrifices, and sacrificial feasts, without making booths and dwelling in them for seven days.

Neh. 8:18. And the book of the law was read from day to day. **וַיִּקְרָא** with the subject indefinite, while Ramb. and others supply Ezra. The reading of the law was only ordered at that celebration of the feast of tabernacles which occurred during the sabbatical year, Deu. 31:10f. The last day was the seventh, for the eighth as a **עֵצְרָה** did not belong to the feast of tabernacles; see rem. on Lev. 23:36. **כַּמִּשְׁכָּה** like 2Ch. 4:20, and elsewhere.

Neh. 9. The day of general fasting and prayer. — On the twenty-fourth day of the month, i.e., two days after the termination of the feast of tabernacles, the children of Israel re-assembled in the temple to humble themselves before God with mourning and fasting, and, after the reading of the law, to confess their own sins and the sins of their fathers (1-3). After the Levites had invited them to praise God (4, 5), a general confession was made, in which the congregation was reminded of all the grace and favour shown by God to His people, from the days of Abraham down to the time then present; and all the departures of the people from their God, all their rebellions against Him, were acknowledged, to show that the bondage and oppression to which Israel was not subjected were the well-deserved punishment of their sins (6-37). This confession of sin much resembles the confession of the faithfulness of God and the unfaithfulness of Israel in the 106th Psalm, both in its plan and details, but differs from this “Hallelujah Psalm” in the circumstance that it does not rise to the praise of God, to the hallelujah, but stops at the confession that God is righteous and true in all that He has done, and that Israel has done wickedly, without definitely uttering a request for pardon and deliverance from oppression.

Neh. 9: 1-3. On the twenty-second of Tishri was the Hazereth of the feast of tabernacles; on the twenty-fourth the congregation re-assembled in the temple,

“with fasting and with sackcloths (penitential garments made of hair; see rem. Joe. 1: 8) and earth upon them,” i.e., spread upon their heads (1Sa. 4:12; 2Sa. 1: 2; Job. 2:12), — the external marks of deep mourning and heaviness of heart.

Neh. 9: 2. “And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed all their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.” This separation from strangers does not specially relate to the dissolution of the marriages contracted with heathen women, nor to any measures taken that only Israelites should be admitted to this assembly (Bertheau). It was rather a voluntary renunciation of connection with the heathen, and of heathen customs.

Neh. 9: 3. And they stood up (i.e., remained standing) in their place (comp. 8: 7), and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God, i.e., listened to the reading of the law, a fourth part of the day (about three hours), and a fourth part (the next three hours) they confessed (made a confession of their sins), and worshipped the Lord their God. This confession and worship is more nearly described 4-37.

Neh. 9: 4, 5. There stood upon the scaffold of the Levites, i.e., upon the platform erected for the Levites (comp. 8: 4), Jeshua and seven other Levites whose names are given, and they cried with a loud voice to God, and said to the assembled congregation, “Stand up, bless the Lord your God for ever and ever! and blessed be the name of Thy glory, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.” The repetition of the names of the Levites in v. 5 shows that this invitation to praise God is distinct from the crying to God with a loud voice of v. 4, and seems to say that the Levites first cried to God, i.e., addressed to Him their confessions and supplications, and after having done so, called upon the congregation to worship God. Eight names of Levites being given in both verses, and five of these — Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, and Sherebiah — being identical, the difference of the three others in the two verses — Bunni, Bani, and Chenani (v. 4), and Hashabniah, Hodijah, and Pethahiah (v. 5) — seems to have arisen from a clerical error, — an appearance favoured also by the circumstance that Bani occurs twice in v. 4. Of the other names in question, Hodijah occurs 10:14, and Pethahiah Ezr. 10:23, as names of Levites, but **כַּנְי** and **חֲשַׁבְנִיָּה** nowhere else. Hence Bunni, Bani, and Chenani (v. 4), and Hashabniah (v. 5), may be assigned to a clerical error; but we have no means for restoring the correct names. With regard to the matter of these verses, Ramb. remarks on v. 4: *constitisse opinor omnes simul, ita tamen ut unus tantum eodem tempore fuerit precatus, ceteris ipsi adstantibus atque sua etiam vice Deum orantibus*, hence that the eight Levites prayed to God successively; while Bertheau thinks that these Levites entreated God, in penitential and

supplicatory psalms, to have mercy on His sinful but penitent people. In this case we must also regard their address to the congregation in v. 5 as a liturgical hymn, to which the congregation responded by praising God in chorus. To this view may be objected the circumstance, that no allusion is made in the narrative to the singing of penitential or other songs. Besides, a confession of sins follows in vv. 6-37, which may fitly be called a crying unto God, without its being stated by whom it was uttered. "This section," says Bertheau, "whether we regard its form or contents, cannot have been sung either by the Levites or the congregation. We recognise in it the speech of an individual, and hence accept the view that the statement of the LXX, that after the singing of the Levites, v. 4, and the praising of God in v. 5, Ezra came forward and spoke the words following, is correct, and that the words *καὶ εἶπεν Ἐσδρας*, which it inserts before v. 6, originally stood in the Hebrew text." But if Psalms, such as Psa. 105, 106, and 107, were evidently appointed to be sung to the praise of God by the Levites or by the congregation, there can be no reason why the prayer vv. 6-37 should not be adapted both in form and matter for this purpose. This prayer by no means bears the impress of being the address of an individual, but is throughout the confession of the whole congregation. The prayer speaks of *our* fathers (vv. 9, 16), of what is come upon *us* (v. 33), addresses Jahve as *our* God, and says *we* have sinned. Of course Ezra might have uttered it in the name of the congregation; but that the addition of the LXX, *καὶ εἶπεν Ἐσδρας*, is of no critical value, and is a mere conjecture of the translators, is evident from the circumstance that the prayer does not begin with the words *הוֹאֵהוּ יְהוָה אֱתָהּ* of v. 6, but passes into the form of direct address to God in the last clause of v. 5: Blessed be the name of *Thy* glory. By these words the prayer which follows is evidently declared to be the confession of those who are to praise the glory of the Lord; and the addition, "and Ezra said," characterized as an unskilful interpolation.

According to what has now been said, the summons, *קוֹמוּ בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה*, v. 5, like the introductions to many Hodu and Hallelujah Psalms (e.g., Psa. 105: 1, 106: 1), is to be regarded as only an exhortation to the congregation to praise God, i.e., to join in the praises following, and to unite heartily in the confession of sin. This view of the connection of vv. 5 and 6 explains the reason why it is not stated either in v. 6, or at the close of this prayer in v. 37, that the assembled congregation blessed God agreeably to the summons thus addressed to them. They did so by silently and heartily praying to, and praising God with the Levites, who were reciting aloud the confession of sin. On *וַיְבָרְכוּ* R. Sal. already remarks: *nunc incipiunt loqui Levitae versus Shechinam s. ad ipsum Deum*. The invitation to praise God insensibly passes into the action of praising. If, moreover, vv. 6-37 are related in the manner above stated to v. 5, then it is

not probable that the crying to God with a loud voice (v. 4) was anything else than the utterance of the prayer subsequently given, vv. 6-37. The repetition of the names in v. 5 is not enough to confirm this view, but must be explained by the breadth of the representation here given, and is rescued from the charge of mere tautology by the fact that in v. 4 the office of the individuals in question is not named, which it is by the word **הַלְוִיִּים** in v. 5. For **הַלְוִיִּים** in v. 4 belongs as genitive to **מַעֲלָה**, and both priests and laymen might have stood on the platform of the Levites. For this reason it is subsequently stated in v. 5, that Jeshua, etc., were Levites; and in doing this the names are again enumerated. In the exhortation, Stand up and bless, etc., Bertheau seeks to separate “for ever and ever” from the imp. **בְּרַכּוּ**, and to take it as a further qualification of **אֱלֹהֵיכֶם**. This is, however, unnatural and arbitrary; comp. 1Ch. 16:26. Still more arbitrary is it to supply “One day all people” to **וַיְבָרְכוּ**, “shall bless Thy name,” etc. **וַיִּמְרוֹמֵם וְגו'** adds a second predicate to **שֵׁם**: and which is exalted above all blessing and praise, i.e., *sublimius est quam ut pro dignitate laudari possit* (R. Sal.).

Neh. 9: 6. In v. 6 this praising of God begins with the acknowledgment that Jahve, the Creator of heaven and earth, chose Abram and made a covenant with him to give the land of Canaan to his seed, and had performed this word (vv. 6-8). These verses form the theme of that blessing the name of His glory, to which the Levites exhorted. This theme is then elucidated by facts from Israel’s history, in four strophes. *a.* When God saw the affliction of His people in Egypt, He delivered them by great signs and wonders from the power of Pharaoh, gave them laws and judgments on Sinai, miraculously provided them with food and water in the wilderness, and commanded them to take possession of the promised land (vv. 9-15). *b.* Although their fathers rebelled against Him, even in the wilderness, God did not withdraw His mercy from them, but sustained them forty years, so that they lacked nothing; and subdued kings before them, so that they were able to conquer and possess the land (vv. 16-25). *c.* After they were settled in the land they rebelled again, and God delivered them into the hand of their oppressors; but as often as they cried unto Him, He helped them again, till at length, because of their continued opposition, He gave them into the power of the people of the lands, yet of His great mercy did not wholly cast them off (vv. 26-31). *d.* May He now too look upon the affliction of His people, as the God that keepeth covenant and mercy, although they have deserved by their sins the troubles they are suffering (vv. 32-37).

Neh. 9: 6-8. “Thou art Jahve alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, and all their host, the earth and all that is thereon, the sea and all therein; and Thou givest life to them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth

Thee. V. 7. Thou art Jahve, the God who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham: V. 8. And foundest his heart faithful before Thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give to his seed, and hast performed Thy word; for Thou art righteous.” Jahve alone is God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all creatures in heaven and on earth. In order duly to exalt the almightiness of God, the notion of heaven is enhanced by the addition “heaven of heavens,” as in Deu. 10:14, 1Ki. 8:27; and that of earth by the addition “the sea and all therein;” comp. Psa. 146: 6. **כָּל-צַבָּאוֹת**, Gen. 2: 1, here refers only to heaven. **מַחֲיֵה**, to cause to live = to give and preserve life. **בְּכֹל** relates to all creatures in heaven and earth. The host of heaven who worshipped God are the angels, as in Psa. 148: 2, 103:21. This only God chose Abram; comp. Gen. 12: 1 with 11:31 and 15: 7, 17: 5, where God bestowed upon the patriarch Abram the name of Abraham. The words, “Thou foundest his heart faithful,” refer to **הַאֲמִין בִּיהוָה** there mentioned. The making of a covenant alludes to Gen. 17: 5f.; the enumeration of six Canaanitish nations to Deu. 7: 1, Exo. 3: 8; comp. with Gen. 15:20f. This His word God performed (fulfilled), for He is righteous. God is called **צַדִּיק**, inasmuch as with Him word and deed correspond with each other; comp. Deu. 32: 4.

Neh. 9: 9-15. The fulfilment of this word by the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their guidance through the wilderness to Canaan.

Neh. 9: 9. “And Thou sawest the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red Sea: V. 10. And showedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh and all his servants, and on all the people of his land, because Thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them, and madest Thyself a name, as this day. V. 11. And Thou dividedst the sea before them, and they went through the midst of the sea on dry land; and their persecutors Thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters.” In v. 9 are comprised two subjects, which are carried out in vv. 10, 11: (1) the affliction of the Israelites in Egypt, which God saw (comp. Exo. 3: 7), and out of which He delivered them by the signs and wonders He showed upon Pharaoh (v. 10); (2) the crying for help at the Red Sea, when the Israelites perceived Pharaoh with his horsemen and chariots in pursuit (Exo. 14:10), and the help which God gave them by dividing the sea, etc. (v. 11). The words in v. 10a are supported by Deu. 6:22, on the ground of the historical narrative, Exo. 7-10. The expression **עָלֵיהֶם** **הַיּוֹדוּ** is formed according to **אֲשֶׁר נָדָו עָלֵיהֶם**, Exo. 18:11. **הַיּוֹדוּ עַל** occurs Exo. 21:14 in a general sense. On **וַתַּעַשׂ לָךְ שֵׁם וְגוֹי** comp. Jer. 32:20, Isa. 58:12, 14, 1Ch. 17:22. A name as this day — in that the miracles which

God then did are still praised, and He continues still to manifest His almighty power. The words of v. 11 are supported by Exo. 14:21, 22, 28, and 15:19. **בְּמִצּוֹלוֹת בְּמֹ אֲבֹן** are from Exo. 15: 5; **בְּמִים עֵינִים** from Exo. 15 and Isa. 43:16.

Neh. 9:12. “And Thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar, and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. V. 13. And Thou camest down upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments: V. 14. And madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses Thy servant. V. 15. And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst; and Thou commandedst them to go in and possess the land, which Thou hadst lifted up Thine hand to give them.” Three particulars in the miraculous leading of Israel through the wilderness are brought forward: *a.* Their being guided in the way by miraculous tokens of the divine presence, in the pillar of fire and cloud, v. 12; comp. Exo. 13:21, Num. 14:14. *b.* The revelation of God on Sinai, and the giving of the law, vv. 13, 14. The descent of God on Sinai and the voice from heaven agree with Exo. 19:18, 20, and 20: 1f., compared with Deu. 4:36. On the various designations of the law, comp. Psalms. 19: 9, 119:43, 39, 142. Of the commandments, that concerning the Sabbath is specially mentioned, and spoken of as a benefit bestowed by God upon the Israelites, as a proclamation of His holy Sabbath, inasmuch as the Israelites were on the Sabbath to share in the rest of God; see rem. on Exo. 20: 9-11. *c.* The provision of manna, and of water from the rock, for their support during their journey through the wilderness on the way to Canaan; Exo. 16: 4, 10f., Exo. 17: 6, Num. 20: 8; comp. Psalms. 78:24, 15, 105:40. **לְבֹא לְרִשֶׁת** like Deu. 9: 1, 5, 11:31, and elsewhere. **אֶת־יְדֶךָ נְשֵׂאתָ** is to be understood according to Num. 14:30.

Neh. 9:16-25. Even the fathers to whom God had shown such favour, repeatedly departed from and rebelled against Him; but God of His great mercy did not forsake them, but brought them into possession of the promised land.

Neh. 9:16. “And they, even our fathers, dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to Thy commandments. V. 17. They refused to obey, and were not mindful of Thy wonders that Thou didst amongst them; and hardened their necks, and appointed a captain to return to their bondage. But Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.” In these verses the conduct of the children of Israel towards God is contrasted with His kindness towards this stiff-necked people, the historical confirmation following in v. 18. **וְהָאֵל** is

emphatic, and prefixed to contrast the conduct of the Israelites with the benefits bestowed on them. The contrast is enhanced by the ו explicative before אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, even our fathers (which J. D. Michaelis would expunge, from a misconception of its meaning, but which Bertheau with good reason defends). Words are accumulated to describe the stiff-necked resistance of the people. הִיָּדְדוּ as above, v. 10. “They hardened their necks” refers to Exo. 32: 9, 33: 3, 34: 9, and therefore already alludes to the worship of the golden calf at Sinai, mentioned v. 18; while in v. 17, the second great rebellion of the people at Kadesh, on the borders of the promised land, Num. 14, is contemplated. The repetition of the expression, “they hardened their hearts,” shows that a second grievous transgression is already spoken of in v. 17. This is made even clearer by the next clause, וַיִּתְּנוּ רֹאשׁ וַגֵּר, which is taken almost verbally from Num. 14: 4: “They said one to another, Let us make a captain (נִתְּנָה רֹאשׁ), and return to Egypt;” the notion being merely enhanced here by the addition לְעַבְדָּתָם, to their bondage. The comparison with Num. 14: 4 also shows that בְּמַרְיָם is a clerical error for בְּמִצְרַיִם, as the LXX read; for בְּמַרְיָם, in their stubbornness, after לְעַבְדָּתָם, gives no appropriate sense. In spite, however, of their stiff-neckedness, God of His mercy and goodness did not forsake them. אֱלֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת, a God of pardons; comp. Dan. 9: 9, Psa. 130: 4. וַיִּרְחוּם וַגֵּר is a reminiscence of Exo. 34: 6. The ו before חָסַד came into the text by a clerical error.

Neh. 9:18. “Yea, they even made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy god that brought thee up out of Egypt, and wrought great provocations. V. 19. Yet Thou, in Thy manifold mercies, didst not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day to lead them, and the pillar of fire by night to show them light in the way wherein they should go. V. 20. Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst: V. 21. And forty years didst Thou sustain them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing, their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.” אַף כִּי, also (even this) = yea even. On the worship of the golden calf, see Exo. 24: 4. The words “they did (wrought) great provocations” involve a condemnation of the worship of the molten calf; nevertheless God did not withdraw His gracious presence, but continued to lead them by the pillar of cloud and fire. The passage Num. 14:14, according to which the pillar of cloud and fire guided the march of the people through the wilderness after the departure from Sinai, i.e., after their transgression in the matter of the calf, is here alluded to. עַמּוּד הָעָנָן is rhetorically enhanced by אֵת: and with respect to the cloudy pillar, it departed not; so, too, in the second clause, אֵת־עַמּוּד הָאֵשׁ; comp. Ewald, § 277, d. The

words, v. 20, “Thou gavest Thy good Spirit,” etc., refer to the occurrence, Num. 11:17, 25, where God endowed the seventy elders with the spirit of prophecy for the confirmation of Moses’ authority. The definition “good Spirit” recalls Psa. 143:10. The sending of manna is first mentioned Num. 11: 6-9, comp. Jos. 5:12; the giving of water, Num. 20: 2-8. — In v. 21, all that the Lord did for Israel is summed up in the assertion of Deu. 2: 7, 8: 4, **לֹא חָסְרוּ**; see the explanation of these passages.

Neh. 9:22-25. The Lord also fulfilled His promise of giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites notwithstanding their rebelliousness. V. 22. “And Thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them by boundaries; and they took possession of the land of Sihon, both the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. V. 23. And Thou didst multiply their children as the stars of heaven, and bring them into the land which Thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess. V. 24. And the children went in and possessed the land, and Thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, both their kings and the people of the land, to do with them according to their pleasure. V. 25. And they took fortified cities, and a fat land, and took possession of houses filled with all kinds of goods, wells digged, vineyards and olive gardens, and fruit trees in abundance; and they ate and became fat, and delighted themselves in Thy great goodness.” **וַתְּחַלְקֵם לְפָאֵה** is variously explained. Aben Ezra and others refer the suffix to the Canaanites, whom God scattered *in multos angulos* or *varias mundi partes*. Others refer it to the Israelites. According to this view, Ramb. says: *fecisti eos per omnes terrae Cananaeae angulos habitare*; and Gusset.: *distribuisti eis terram usque ad angulum h. l. nulla vel minima regionum particula excepta*. But **חָלַק**, Piel, generally means the dividing of things; and when used of persons, as in Gen. 49: 7, Lam 4:16, to divide, to scatter, *sensu malo*, which is here inapplicable to the Israelites. **חָלַק** signifies to divide, especially by lot, and is used chiefly concerning the partition of the land of Canaan, in Kal, Jos. 14: 5, 18: 2, and in Piel, Jos. 13: 7, 18:10, 19:51. The word **פָּאֵה** also frequently occurs in Joshua, in the sense of a corner or side lying towards a certain quarter of the heavens, and of a boundary; comp. Jos. 15: 5, 18:12, 14, 15, 20. According to this, Bertheau rightly takes the words to say: Thou didst divide them (the kingdoms and nations, i.e., the land of these nations) according to sides or boundaries, i.e., according to certain definite limits. Sihon is the king of Heshbon (Deu. 1: 4), and the **ו** before **אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִן חִ** is not to be expunged as a gloss, but regarded as explicative: and, indeed, both the land of the king of Heshbon and the land of Og. The conquest of these two kingdoms is named first, because it preceded the possession of Canaan (Num. 21:21-35). The

increase of the children of the Israelites is next mentioned, v. 23; the fathers having fallen in the wilderness, and only their children coming into the land of Canaan. The numbering of the people in the plains of Moab (Num. 26) is here alluded to, when the new generation was found to be twice as numerous as that which marched out of Egypt; while the words **לָבוֹא לְרֵשֶׁת**, here and in v. 15, are similar to Deu. 1:10. The taking possession of Canaan is spoken of in v. 24. **וַתִּבְנֶנּוּ** recalls Deu. 9: 3. **בְּרִצּוֹנָם**, according to their pleasure, comp. Dan. 8: 4. Fortified cities, as Jericho and Ai.

Neh. 9:26-31. But even in that good land the fathers were disobedient: they rejected the commands of God, slew the prophets who admonished them, and were not brought back to the obedience of God even by the chastisement inflicted on them, till at length God delivered them into the hands of Gentile kings, though after His great mercy He did not utterly forsake them. — V. 26. “And they were disobedient, and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy law behind their backs, and slew Thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to Thee, and they wrought great provocations. V. 27. And Thou deliveredst them into the hand of their oppressors, so that they oppressed them; and in the time of their oppression they cried unto Thee. Then Thou heardest them from heaven, and according to Thy manifold mercies Thou gavest them deliverers, who delivered them out of the hand of their oppressors. V. 28. And when they had rest, they again did evil before Thee. Then Thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them; and they cried again unto Thee, and Thou heardest from heaven, and didst deliver them according to Thy great mercy, many times.”

Neh. 9:26. V. 26 again contains, like v. 16, a general condemnation of the conduct of the children of Israel towards the Lord their God during the period between their entrance into Canaan and the captivity, which is then justified by the facts adduced in the verses following. In proof of their disobedience, it is mentioned that they cast the commands of God behind their back (comp. 1Ki. 14:19, Eze. 23:35), and slew the prophets, e.g., Zechariah (2Ch. 24:21), the prophets of the days of Jezebel (1Ki. 18:13, 19:10), and others who rebuked their sins to turn them from them. **הָעֵיד בְּ**, to testify against sinners, comp. 2Ki. 17:13, 15. The last clause of v. 26 is a kind of refrain, repeated from v. 18.

Neh. 9:27, 28. Vv. 27 and 28 refer to the times of the judges; comp. Jud. 2:11-23. **בְּרִשְׁעִים** are the judges whom God raised up to deliver Israel out of the power of their oppressors; comp. Jud. 3: 9f. with 2:16. **רַבּוֹת עֵתִים**, multitudes of times, is a co-ordinate accusative: at many times, frequently; **רַבּוֹת** like Lev. 25:51.

Neh. 9:29. “And testifiedst against them, to bring them back again to Thy law; yet they hearkened not to Thy commandments, and sinned against Thy judgments, which if a man do he shall live in them, and gave a resisting shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. V. 30. And Thou didst bear with them many years, and didst testify against them by Thy Spirit through Thy prophets; but they would not hearken, therefore Thou gavest them into the hand of the people of the lands. V. 31. Nevertheless in Thy great mercy Thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for Thou art gracious and merciful.”

Neh. 9:29, 30. Vv. 29 and 30 treat of the times of the kings. **וְתִעַד בָּהֶם** is the testimony of the prophets against the idolatrous people; comp. v. 26. **וּבְמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ** is emphatically prefixed, and taken up again by **בָּם**. The sentence, which if a man do he shall live in them, is formed upon Lev. 18: 5, comp. Eze. 20:11. On the figurative expression, they gave a resisting shoulder, comp. Zec. 7:11. The simile is taken from the ox, who rears against the yoke, and desires not to bear it; comp. Hos. 4:16. The sentences following are repeated from v. 16. **מִשְׁדָּךְ עֲלֵיהֶם** is an abbreviated expression for **מִשְׁדָּךְ חָסַד**, Psa. 36:11, 109:12, Jer. 31: 3, to draw out, to extend for a long time favour to any one: Thou hadst patience with them for many years, viz., the whole period of kingly rule from Solomon to the times of the Assyrians. The delivering into the power of the people of the lands, i.e., of the heathen (comp. Psa. 106:40f.), began with the invasion of the Assyrians (comp. v. 32), who destroyed the kingdom of the ten tribes, and was inflicted upon Judah also by means of the Chaldeans.

Neh. 9:31. But in the midst of these judgments also, God, according to His promise, Jer. 4:27, 5:10, 18, 30:11, and elsewhere, did not utterly forsake His people, nor make a full end of them; for He did not suffer them to become extinct in exile, but preserved a remnant, and delivered it from captivity.

Neh. 9:32-37. May then, God, who keepeth covenant and mercy, now also look upon the affliction of His people, though kings, rulers, priests, and people have fully deserved this punishment; for they are now bondmen, and in great affliction, in the land of their fathers.

V. 32. “And now, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble that hath come upon us, on our kings, our princes our priests, our prophets, and our fathers, and on all Thy people, since the times of the kings of Assyria unto this day, seem little to Thee. V. 33. Thou art just in all that is come upon us; for Thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly. V. 34. And our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept Thy law, nor hearkened to Thy commandments and Thy testimonies, wherewith Thou didst testify against them. V. 35. And they have not served Thee in their kingdom, and in

Thy great goodness that Thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which Thou gavest up to them, and have not turned from their wicked works. V. 36. Behold, we are now bondmen; and the land that Thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we are bondmen in it. V. 37. And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom Thou hast set over us because of our sins; and they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.”

The invocation of God, v. 32, like that in 1: 5, is similar to Deu. 10:17. **לְפָנֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי יִמְעַט** stands independently, the following clause being emphasized by **אֵת**, like e.g., v. 19: Let not what concerns all our trouble be little before Thee; comp. the similar construction with **מֵעַט** in Jos. 20:17. What seems little is easily disregarded. The prayer is a *litotes*; and the sense is, Let our affliction be regarded by Thee as great and heavy. The nouns **לְמַלְכֵינוּ**, etc., are in apposition to the suffix of **מִצְאַתָנוּ**, the object being continued by **לְ**.

Neh. 9:33. Thou art just: comp. v. 8, Deu. 32: 4, Ezr. 9:15. **עַל כֹּל**, upon all, i.e., concerning all that has befallen us; because their sins deserved punishment, and God is only fulfilling His word upon the sinners. In v. 34, **אֵת** again serves to emphasize the subject. In the enumeration of the different classes of the people, the prophets are here omitted, because, as God’s witnesses, they are not reckoned among these who had transgressed, though involved (v. 32) in the sufferings that have fallen on the nation.

Neh. 9:35. **הֵם** are the fathers who were not brought to repentance by God’s goodness. **בְּמַלְכוּתָם**, in their independent kingdom. **מוֹבְדֵי הָרֶב**, Thy much good, i.e., the fulness of Thy goodness, or “in the midst of Thy great blessing” (Bertheau). The predicate **הַרְחֵבָה**, the wide, extensive country, is derived from Exo. 3: 8. In v. 36f., the prayer that God would not lightly regard the trouble of His people, is supported by a statement of the need and affliction in which they still are. They are bondmen in the land which God gave to their fathers as a free people, bondmen of the Persian monarchs; and the increase of the land which God appointed for His people belongs to the kings who rule over them. The rulers of the land dispose of their bodies and their cattle, by carrying off both men and cattle for their use, e.g., for military service. **כְּרִצּוֹנָם** like v. 24.

Neh. 10. *A covenant made (1-32), and an engagement entered into, to furnish what was needed for the maintenance of the temple, its services, and ministers (vv. 33-40). — Vv. 1-28. For the purpose of giving a lasting influence to this day of prayer and fasting, the assembled people, after the confession of sin (given in Neh. 9), entered into a written agreement, by which they bound themselves by an oath to separate from the heathen, and to keep the*

commandments and ordinances of God, — a document being prepared for this purpose, and sealed by the heads of their different houses.

Neh. 10: 1. And because of all this we make and write a sure covenant; and our princes, Levites, and priests sign the sealed (document). **בְּכֹל-זֵאת** does not mean *post omne hoc*, after all that we have done this day (Schmid, Bertheau, and others); still less, *in omni hoc malo, quod nobis obtigerat* (Rashi, Aben Ezra), but upon all this, i.e., upon the foundation of the preceding act of prayer and penitence, we made **אִמְנָה**, i.e., a settlement, a sure agreement (the word recurs Neh. 11:23); hence **כִּבְרֵת** is used as with **בְּרִית**, Neh. 9: 8. **אִמְנָה** may again be taken as the object of **כִּתְבִּים**, we write it; **וְעַל הַחֲתוּמִּים** be understood as “our princes sealed.” **הַחֲתוּמִּים** is the sealed document; comp. Jer. 22:11, 14. **עַל הַחֲתוּמִּים** means literally, Upon the sealed document were our princes, etc.; that is, our princes sealed or signed it. Signing was effected by making an impression with a seal bearing a name; hence originated the idiom **עַל הַחֲתוּמִּים אִשָּׁר**, “he who was upon the sealed document,” meaning he who had signed the document by sealing it. By this derived signification is the plural **עַל הַחֲתוּמִּים** (v. 2), “they who were upon the document,” explained: they who had signed or sealed the document.

Neh. 10: 2. At the head of the signatures stood Nehemiah the Tirshatha, as governor of the country, and Zidkijah, a high official, of whom nothing further is known, perhaps (after the analogy of Ezr. 4: 9, 17) secretary to the governor. Then follow (in vv. 3-9) twenty-one names, with the addition: these, the priests. Of these twenty-one names, fifteen occur in Neh. 12: 2-7 as chiefs of the priests who came up with Joshua and Zerubbabel from Babylon, and in Neh. 12:11-20 as heads of priestly houses. Hence it is obvious that all the twenty-one names are those of heads of priestly classes, who signed the agreement in the names of the houses and families of their respective classes. Seraiah is probably the prince of the house of God dwelling at Jerusalem, mentioned Neh. 11:11, who signed in place of the high priest. For further remarks on the orders Neh. of priests and their heads, see Neh. 12: 1f.

Neh. 10:10-14. The Levites who sealed were: Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel, and their brethren, fourteen names. Sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel returned, together with seventy-four other Levites, with Zerubbabel and Jeshua; Ezr. 2: 4; Neh. 7:42. Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, and Sherebiah are also named in Neh. 12: 8 as heads of orders of Levites. Of the rest nothing further is known, but we may regard them as heads of Levitical houses.

Neh. 10:15-28. The heads of the people. Forty-four names, thirteen of which are found in the list (Ezr. 2) of the kindreds who returned with Zerubbabel; see Ezr. 2. The rest are names either of the heads of the different houses into which these kindreds were divided, or of the elders of the smaller towns of Benjamin and Judah. The fact that, while only thirty-three kindreds and placed are enumerated in Ezr. 2, forty-four occur here, — although names of kindreds mentioned in Ezr. 2, e.g., Shephatiah, Arah, Zaccai, etc., are wanting here, — is to be explained partly by the circumstance that these kindreds included several houses whose different heads all subscribed, and partly by fresh accessions during the course of years to the number of houses.

Neh. 10:29-32. All the members of the community acceded to the agreement thus signed by the princes of the people, and the heads of the priests and Levites, and bound themselves by an oath to walk in the law of the Lord, and to separate themselves from the heathen.

Neh. 10:29, 30. And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the door-keepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, all who had knowledge and understanding, held with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into an oath and curse, etc. מְחֻזְקִים is the predicate of the subjects in v. 29: they were holding with their brethren, i.e., uniting with them in this matter. “The rest of the people, the priests,” etc., are the members of the community, exclusive of the princes and heads of the priestly and Levitical orders. The Nethinim, to whom belonged the servants of Solomon (see rem. on Ezr. 2:43f.), were probably also represented in the assembly by the heads of the Levites. To these are added all who had separated themselves, etc., i.e., the descendants of those Israelites who had been left in the land, and who now joined the new community; see rem. on Ezr. 6:21. The connection of נִבְדָּל with אֶל-תּוֹרַת is significant: separated from the heathen to the law of God, i.e., to live according thereto; comp. Ezr. 6:21. Not, however, the men only, but also women and children of riper years, acceded to the covenant. מִבֵּין בְּלִי-יֹדַע, every one knowing, understanding (מִבֵּין and יֹדַע being connected as an asyndeton, to strengthen the meaning), refers to sons and daughters of an age sufficient to enable them to understand the matter. אֲדִירָהֶם, their nobles, is connected in the form of an apposition with אֲחֵיהֶם, instead of the adjective הָאֲדִירִים. The princes and the heads of the community and priesthood are intended. בּוֹא בְאֵלָה, to enter into an oath, comp. Eze. 17:13. אֵלָה is an oath of self-imprecation, grievous punishments being imprecated in case of transgression; שְׂבוּעָה, a promissory oath to live conformably with the law. We

hence perceive the tenor of the agreement entered into and sealed by the princes. *Non subscripsit quidem populus, remarks Clericus, sed ratum habuit, quid-quid nomine totius populi a proceribus factum erat, juravitque id a se observatum iri.* Besides the general obligation to observe all the commandments, judgments, and statutes of God, two points, then frequently transgressed, are specially mentioned in vv. 31 and 23. In v. 31: that we would not give our daughters to the people of the lands, etc.; see rem. on Ezr. 9: 2. In v. 32: that if the people of the land brought wares or any victuals on the Sabbath-day to sell, we would not buy if of them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day; and would let the seventh year lie, and the loan of every hand. The words **עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ וּגְוֵי** are prefixed absolutely, and are afterwards subordinated to the predicate of the sentence by **מִקְחוֹת מָהֵם**, wares for sale, from **לָקַח**, to take, in the sense of to buy, occurs only here. **נִקַּח מֵהֶם**, to take from them, i.e., to buy. **יּוֹם קֹדֶשׁ** beside **שַׁבָּת** means the other holy days, the annual festivals, on which, according to the law, Num. 28 and 29, no work was to be done. To the sanctification of the Sabbath pertained the celebration of the sabbatical year, which is therefore named immediately afterwards. The words **אֶת־הַשָּׁנָה הַשִּׁבְעִית**, to let the seventh year lie, i.e., in the seventh year to let the land lie untilled and unsown, is an abbreviation taken from the language of the law, Exo. 28:10. **מִשָּׂא כָל־יָד** also depends upon **נָמַשׁ**. This expression (**מִשָּׂא**, not **מִשָּׂא**, being the reading of the best editions) is to be explained from Deu. 15: 2, and means the loan, that which the hand has lent to another; see rem. on Deu. 15: 2.

Neh. 10:33-40. AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS MINISTERS. — If the community seriously intended to walk by the rule of God's law, they must take care that the temple service, as the public worship of the community, should be provided for according to the law and a firm footing and due solemnity thus given to religion. For this purpose, it was indispensable to guarantee the contributions prescribed for the necessary expenses of the temple worship, and the support of its ministers. Hence this entering into a solemn agreement to observe the law was regarded as a suitable occasion for regulating the services prescribed by the law with respect to the temple and its ministers, and mutually binding themselves to their observance.

Neh. 10:33. We ordained for ourselves (**עָלֵינוּ**, upon us, inasmuch as such things are spoken of as are taken upon one). **לָהֵט עָלֵינוּ**, to lay upon ourselves the third part of a shekel yearly for the service of the house of our God. It is not said who were to be bound to furnish this contribution, but it is assumed that it was a well-known custom. This appointed payment is evidently only a revival of the Mosaic precept, Exo. 30:13, that every man of twenty years of age and

upwards should give half a shekel as a **תְּרוּמָה** to the Lord, — a tribute which was still paid in Christ’s days, Mat. 17:24. In consideration, however, of the poverty of the greater portion of the community, it was now lowered to a third of a shekel. The view of Aben Ezra, that a third of a shekel was to be paid in addition to the half shekel levied in conformity with the law, is unsupported by the text. **הַעֲבוּדָה**, the service of the house of God, is not the building and repairs of the temple, but the regular worship. For, according to v. 34, the tax was to be applied to defraying the expenses of worship, to supplying the shew-bread, the continual meat and burnt offerings (Num. 28: 3-8), the sacrifices for the Sabbaths, new moons (Num. 28: 9-15), and festivals (Num. 28:16-29, 38), — for the **קִדְשִׁים**, holy gifts, by which, from their position between the burnt-offering and the sin-offering, we may understand the thank-offerings, which were offered in the name of the congregation, as e.g., the two lambs at Pentecost, Lev. 23:19, and the offerings brought at feasts of dedication, comp. Exo. 24: 5, Ezr. 6:17, — for the sin-offerings which were sacrificed at every great festival; and finally for all the work of the house of our God, i.e., whatever else was needful for worship (לְ must be supplied from the context before **כָּל-מְלָאכָתָהּ**). The establishment of such a tax for the expenses of worship, does not justify the view that the contributions promised by Artaxerxes in his edict, Ezr. 7:20f., of things necessary to worship had ceased, and that the congregation had now to defray the expenses from their own resources. For it may readily be supposed, that besides the assistance afforded by the king, the congregation might also esteem it needful to furnish a contribution, to meet the increased requirements of worship, and thus to augment the revenues of the temple, — the royal alms being limited to a certain amount (see Ezr. 7:22).

Neh. 10:35. “And we cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people for the wood-offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after our houses, at times appointed, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law.” In the law we merely find it prescribed that wood should be constantly burning on the altar, and that the priest should burn wood on it every morning, and burn thereon the burnt-offering (Lev. 6:12f.). The law gave no directions concerning the procuring of the wood; yet the rulers of the people must, at all events, have always provided for the regular delivery of the necessary quantity. Nehemiah now gives orders, as he himself tells us, 13:31, which make this matter the business of the congregation, and the several houses have successively to furnish a contribution, in the order decided by casting lots. The words, “at times appointed, year by year,” justify the conclusion that the order was settled for several years, and not that all the different houses contributed in each year. ^{f12}

Neh. 10:36-38. It was also arranged to contribute the first-fruits prescribed in the law. The infinitive **לְהַבִּיאַ** depends on **הָעֵמֶדְנוּ**, and is co-ordinate with **לָתֵת**, v. 33. The first-fruits of the ground, comp. Exo. 23:19, 34:26, Deu. 26: 2; the first-fruits of all fruit trees, comp. Num. 18:13, Lev. 19:23; the first-born of our sons who were redeemed according to the estimation of the priest, Num. 18:16, and of our cattle (i.e., in the case of the unclean, the required redemption, Exo. 13:12f., Num. 18:15), and the firstlings of the herds and of the flocks, the fat of which was consumed on the altar, the flesh becoming the share of the priests, Num. 18:17. In v. 38 the construction is altered, the first person of the imperfect taking the place of the infinitive: and we will bring the first-fruits. **עֲרֹסוֹת**, probably groats or ground flour; see rem. on Num. 15:20, etc. **תְּרוּמוֹת**, heave-offerings, the offering in this connection, is probably that of wheat and barley, Eze. 45:13, or of the fruits of the field, which are suitably followed by the “fruit of all manner of trees.” On “the first of the wine and oil,” comp. Num. 18:12. These offerings of first-fruits were to be brought into the chambers of the house of God, where they were to be kept in store, and distributed to the priests for their support. “And the tithes of our ground (will we bring) to the Levites; and they, the Levites, receive the tithes in all our country towns. (V. 39) And a priest, a son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites take tithes; and the Levites shall bring the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, into the chambers of the treasury.” The parenthetical sentences in these verses, **וְהֵם הַלְוִיִּם הַמְעֹשְׂרִים** and **הַלְוִיִּם בְּעֵשֶׂר**, have been variously understood. **עֵשֶׂר** in the Piel and Hiphil meaning elsewhere to pay tithe, comp. Deu. 14:22, 26:12, Gen. 28:22, many expositors adhere to this meaning in these passages also, and translate v. 38: for they, the Levites, must give again the tenth (to the priests); and v. 39: when the Levites give the tenth; while the LXX, Vulgate, Syriac, Rashi, Aben Ezra, Clericus, Bertheau, and others, take **עֵשֶׂר** and **הָעֵשֶׂר** in these sentences as signifying to collect tithe. We prefer the latter view, as giving a more suitable sense. For the remark that the Levites must give back the tenth (v. 38) does not present so appropriate a motive for the demand that the tithes should be paid, as that the tithes are due to the Levites. Still less does the addition, in our agricultural towns, suit the sentence: the Levites must give back the tithe to the priests. Again, the fact that it is not said till v. 39 that the Levites have to give the tenth of the tenth to the priests, speaks still more against this view. A priest is to be present when the Levites take the tenth, so that the share of the priests may not be lessened. On “the tenth of the tenth,” comp. Num. 18:26. Hezekiah had provided store-chambers in the temple, in which to deposit the tithes, 1Ch. 31:11.

Neh. 10:40. V. 40 is confirmatory of the preceding clause: the Levites were to bring the tithe of the tithes for the priests into the chambers of the temple; for thither are both the children of Israel and the Levites, to bring all heave-offerings of corn, new wine, and oil: for there are the holy vessels for the service of the altar (comp. Num. 4:15), and the priests that minister, and the doorkeepers and the singers, for whose maintenance these gifts provide. "And we will not forsake the house of our God," i.e., we will take care that the service of God's house shall be provided for; comp. Neh. 13:11-14.

Ch. 11. — Increase of the Inhabitants of Jerusalem. List of the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the Other Towns.

Neh. 11: 1, 2. Vv. 1 and 2 narrate the carrying out of Nehemiah's resolution, Neh. 7: 4, to make Jerusalem more populous, and follow Neh. 7: 5 as to matter, but the end of Neh. 10 as to time. For while Nehemiah, after the completion of the wall, was occupied with the thought of bringing into the thinly populated capital a larger number of inhabitants, and had for this purpose convoked a public assembly, that a list of the whole Israelite population of the towns of Benjamin and Judah might be taken in hand, the seventh month of the year arrived, in which all the people assembled at Jerusalem to perform those acts of worship and solemnities (described 8-10) in which this month abounded. Hence it was not till after the termination of these services that Nehemiah was able to carry out the measures he had resolved on. For there can be no doubt that vv. 1 and 2 of the present chapter narrate the execution of these measures. The statement that one in ten of all the people was appointed by lot to dwell in Jerusalem, and the remaining nine in other cities, and that the people blessed the men who showed themselves willing to dwell at Jerusalem, can have no other meaning than, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were increased in this proportion, and that this was consequently the measure which God had, according to Neh. 7: 5, put into Nehemiah's heart to take. The statement taken by itself is indeed very brief, and its connection with Neh. 7: 5 not very evident. But the brevity and abruptness do not justify Bertheau's view, that these two verses are not the composition of Nehemiah himself, but only an extract from a larger context, in which this circumstance was fully explained. For Nehemiah's style not unfrequently exhibits a certain abruptness; comp. e.g., the commencements of chs. 5 and 6, or the information Neh. 13: 6, which are no less abrupt, and which yet no one has conceived to be mere extracts from some other document. Besides, as the connection between Neh. 7: 5 and 11: 1 is interrupted by the relation of the events of the seventh month, so, too, is the account of the building of the wall, Neh. 4:17, 6:15f., and 7: 1, interrupted by the insertion of occurrences which took place during its progress. The first sentence, v. 1, "And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem," cannot be so

closely connected with the next, “and the rest of the people cast lots,” etc., as to place the rulers in direct contrast to the rest of the people, but must be understood by its retrospect to Neh. 7: 4, which gives the following contrast: The rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem, but few of the people dwelt there; to this is joined the next sentence: and the rest of the people cast lots. The “rest of the people” does not mean the assembled people with the exception of the rulers, but the people with the exception of the few who dwelt at Jerusalem. These cast lots to bring (לְהַבִּיאַם) one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem. The predicate, the holy city, occurs here and v. 18 for the first time. Jerusalem is so called, on the ground of the prophecies, Joe. 3:17 and Isa. 48: 2, because the sanctuary of God, the temple, was there. בְּעָרִים means, in the other cities of Judah and Benjamin. הַמְתַּנְדְּבִים, those who showed themselves willing to dwell in Jerusalem, is taken by most expositors in contrast to those who were bound to do this in consequence of the decision of the lot; and it is then further supposed that some first went to Jerusalem of their free choice, and that the lot was then cast with respect to the rest. There are not, however, sufficient grounds for this conclusion, nor yet for the assumption that the decision of the lot was regarded as a constraint. The disposal of the lot was accepted as a divine decision, with which all had, whether willingly or unwillingly, to comply. All who willingly acquiesced in this decision might be designated as מְתַנְדְּבִים; and these departed to Jerusalem accompanied by the blessings of the people. Individuals are not so much meant, as chiefly fathers of families, who went with their wives and children.

Neh. 11: 3-36. THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM AND THE OTHER CITIES. — V. 3. The title reads: “These are the heads of the province who dwelt at Jerusalem; and in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, Israel, the priests, the Levites, the Nethinim, and the sons of Solomon’s servants.” הַמְדִּינָה is, as in Ezr. 2: 1, the land of Judah, as a province of the Persian kingdom. The repetition of יָשְׁבוּ after בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה is not to be understood as contrasting those who dwelt in the cities with the dwellers in Jerusalem in the sense of “but in the cities of Judah dwelt,” etc., but is here a mere pleonasm. Even the enumeration of the different classes of inhabitants: Israel, the priests, etc., clearly shows that no such contrast is intended; for Israel, the priests, etc., dwelt not only in Jerusalem, but also, according to v. 20, in the other cities of Judah. And this is placed beyond all doubt by the contents of the list following; the inhabitants of Jerusalem being enumerated 4-24, and the inhabitants of the other cities of Judah and Benjamin, 25-36. If, however, this title refers to the whole of the following list, it cannot, as Rambach and others thought, contain only an enumeration of those who, in consequence of the lot, had taken up their residence at Jerusalem, but must be intended as a list

of the population of the whole province of Judah in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. It seems strange that the title should announce **רָאשֵׁי הַמְּדִינָה**, while in the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem are given, besides the heads, the numbers of their brethren, i.e., of the individuals or fathers of families under these heads; and that in the list of the inhabitants of the other cities, only inhabitants of Judah and Benjamin are spoken of. Hence this statement refers *a potiori* to the heads, including the houses and families belonging to them, while in the case of the other cities it is assumed that the inhabitants of each locality were under a head. With v. 4 begins the enumeration of the heads dwelling in Jerusalem, with their houses; and the first clause contains a special title, which affirms that (certain) of the children of Judah and of the children of Benjamin dwelt at Jerusalem. On the parallel list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem before the captivity, 1Ch. 9: 2-34, and its relation to the present list, see the remarks on 1Ch. 9.

Neh. 11: 4-6. Of the children of Judah two heads: Athaiah of the children of Perez (comp. 1Ch. 2: 4), and Maaseiah of the children of Shela. It has been already remarked on 1Ch. 9: 5, that **הַשְּׁלֵנִי** is wrongly pointed, and should be read **כַּל-חֲנֹהּ הַשְּׁלֵנִי**. is a proper name, as in 3:15. Athaiah and Maaseiah are not further known. There were in all four hundred and sixty-eight able-bodied men of the sons of Perez, i.e., four hundred and sixty-eight fathers of families of the race of Perez, among whom are probably included the fathers of families belonging to Shela, the younger brother of Perez.

Neh. 11: 7-9. Of the Benjamites there were two heads of houses: Sallu, and after him Gabbai-Sallai, with nine hundred and twenty-eight fathers of families. Their chief was Joel the son of Zichri, and Jehuda the son of Sennah over the city as second (prefect).

Neh. 11:10-14. Of the priests: Jedaiah, Joiarib, and Jachin, three heads of houses, therefore of orders of priests (for **בֵּן** before Joiarib probably crept into the text by a clerical error; see rem. on 1Ch. 9:10); Seraiah, a descendant of Ahitub, as ruler of the house of God, and their brethren, i.e., the eight hundred and twenty-two ministering priests belonging to these three orders. Also Adaiah, of the house or order of Malchiah, and his brethren, two hundred and forty-two fathers of families; and lastly, Amashai, of the order of Immer, with one hundred and twenty-eight brethren, i.e., priests. And their chief was Zabdiel ben Haggadolim (LXX **υἱὸς τῶν μεγάλων**). **עֲלֵיהֶם** refers to all the before-named priests. **רָאשֵׁים לְאֲבוֹת** heads of fathers, i.e., of families, v. 13, is striking, for the brethren of Adaiah (**אֲחָיו**), in number two hundred and forty-two, could not be heads of houses, but only fathers of families. The words seem

to have come into the text only by comparing it with 1Ch. 9:13. If they were genuine, we should be obliged to understand **רָאשִׁים לְאֲבוֹת** of fathers of families, contrary to general usage.

Neh. 11:15-18. Of Levites, Shemaiah, a descendant of Bunni, with the members of his house; Shabbethai and Jozabad, “of the heads of the Levites over the outward business of the house of God,” i.e., two heads of the Levites who had the care of the outward business of the temple, probably charged with the preservation of the building and furniture, and the office of seeing that all things necessary for the temple worship were duly delivered. The names Shabbethai and Jozabad have already occurred, Neh. 8: 7, as those of two Levites, and are here also personal names of heads of Levites, as the addition **מְרָאשֵׁי הַלְוִיִּם** informs us. As the office of these two is stated, so also is that of those next following in v. 17; whence it appears that Shemaiah, of whom no such particular is given, was head of the Levites charged with attending on the priests at the sacrificial worship (the **מְלֹאכֶת בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים**, v. 22). The three named in v. 17, Mattaniah an Asaphite, Bakbukiah, and Abda a Jeduthunite, are the chiefs of the three Levitical orders of singers. Mattaniah is called **הַתְּחִלָּה רֹאשׁ**, head of the beginning, which gives no meaning; and should probably, as in the LXX and Vulgate, be read **רֹאשׁ הַתְּחִלָּה**: head of the songs of praise, — he praised for who praised, i.e., sounded the *Hodu* for prayer; comp. 1Ch. 16: 5, where Asaph is called the chief of the band of singers. He is followed by Bakbukiah as second, that is, leader of the second band (**מֵאַחֲרָיו מְשֻׁנָּה** like **מֵאַחֲרָיו מְשֻׁנָּה**, 1Ch. 16: 5); and Abda the Jeduthunite, as leader of the third. All the Levites in the holy city, i.e., all who dwelt in Jerusalem, amounted to two hundred and eighty-four individuals or fathers of families. The number refers only to the three classes named vv. 15-17. For the gatekeepers are separately numbered in v. 19 as one hundred and seventy-two, of the families of Akkub and Talmon.

Neh. 11:20-24. Certain special remarks follow in vv. 20-24. — V. 20 states that the rest of the Israelites, priests, and Levites dwelt in all the (other) cities of Judah, each in his inheritance. These cities are enumerated in v. 25f.

Neh. 11:21. The Nethinim dwelt in Ophel, the southern slope of Mount Moriah; see rem. on Neh. 3:26. Their chiefs were Zihah and Gispa. **צִיְחָה** occurs Ezer. 2:43, followed by **חֲשׂוּפָא**, as head of a division of Levites; whence Bertheau tries, but unsuccessfully, to identify the latter name with **חֲשׂוּפָא**. For it does not follow that, because a division of Nethinim was descended from Hasupha, that Gishpa, one of the chiefs of those Nethinim who dwelt on Ophel, must be the same individual as this Hasupha.

Neh. 11:22. And the overseer (chief) of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi, the son of Bani, of the sons of Asaph, the singers, in the business of the house of God. The **מְלֹאכָה** of the house of God was the duty of the Levites of the house of Shemaiah, v. 15. Hence the remark in the present verse is supplementary to v. 15. The chiefs or presidents of the two other divisions of Levites — of those to whom the outward business was entrusted, and of the singers — are named in vv. 16 and 17; while, in the case of those entrusted with the business of the house of God, v. 15, the chiefs are not named, probably because they were over the singers, the sons of Asaph, who in v. 15 had not as yet been named. This is therefore done afterwards in v. 22. **לְנִיד מְלֹאכָת**, *coram opere*, i.e., *circa ea negotia, quae coram in templo exigenda erant* (Burm. in Ramb.), does not belong to **הַמְשָׁרְרִים**, but to **בְּקִיד הַלְוִיִּם**: Uzzi was overseer of the Levites in respect of their business in the house of God, i.e., of those Levites who had the charge of this business. The reason of this is thus given in v. 23: “for a command of the king was over them, and an ordinance was over the singers concerning the matter of every day.” **עָלֵיהֶם** refers to the Levites. “A command of the king was over them” means: the king had commanded them. This command was concerning **דְּבַר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ**, the matter of every day. The words stand at the end of the verse, because they refer to the two subjects **הַמְלֶכֶת** and **אִמְנָה**. **אִמְנָה** is an arrangement depending upon mutual agreement, a treaty, an obligation entered into by agreement; comp. 10: 1. The meaning of the verse is: The every-day matter was laid upon the Levites by the command of the king, upon the singers by an agreement entered into. **בְּיוֹמוֹ דְּבַר יוֹם**, *pensum quotidianum*, is correctly explained by Schmid: *de rebus necessariis in singulos dies*. That we are not to understand thereby the contribution for every day, the rations of food (Ramb., Berth.), but the duty to be done on each day, is obvious from the context, in which not provisions, but the business of the Levites, is spoken of; and Uzzi the Asaphite was placed over the Levites in respect of their business in the house of God, and not in respect of food and drink. The business of the Levites in the house of God was determined by the command of the king; the business of the singers, on the contrary, especially that one of the singers should exercise a supervision over the services of the Levites in worship, was made the matter of an **אִמְנָה**, an agreement entered into among themselves by the different divisions of Levites. The king is not David, who once regulated the services of the Levites (1Ch. 23: 4f.), but the Persian king Artaxerxes, who is mentioned as **הַמְלֶכֶת** in v. 24; and **מִצְוַת הַמְלֶכֶת** undoubtedly refers to the full power bestowed by Artaxerxes upon Ezra to order all that concerned the worship of God at Jerusalem; Ezr. 7:12f.

Neh. 11:24. Finally, the official is named who had to transact with the king the affairs of the people, i.e., of the whole Jewish community in Judah and Jerusalem. Pethahiah, a Jew of the descendants of Zerah, was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people. לִיד הַמֶּלֶךְ can scarcely be understood of a royal commissioner at Jerusalem, but certainly designates an official transacting the affairs of the Jewish community at the hand of the king, at his court.

Neh. 11:25-36. THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWNS OF JUDAH AND BENJAMIN. — The heads who, with their houses, inhabited country districts are here no longer enumerated, but only the towns, with their adjacent neighbourhoods, which were inhabited by Jews and Benjamites; and even these are but summarily mentioned.

Neh. 11:25-30. The districts inhabited by the children of Judah. "And with respect to the towns in their fields, there dwelt of the sons of Judah in Kirjath-arba and its daughters," etc. The use of אֵל as an introductory or emphatic particle is peculiar to this passage, לְ being elsewhere customary in this sense; comp. Ew. § 310, a. אֵל denotes a respect to something. הַצְּרִים, properly enclosures, signifies, according to Lev. 25:31, villages, towns, boroughs, without walls. שְׂדוֹת, fields, field boundaries. בְּנוֹתֶיהָ, the villages and estates belonging to a town; as frequently in the lists of towns in the book of Joshua. Kirjath-arba is Hebron, Gen. 23: 2. Jekabzeel, like Kabzeel, Jos. 15:21. הַצְּרִיָּה, its enclosed places, the estates belonging to a town, as in Jos. 15:45f. Jeshua, mentioned only here, and unknown. Moladah and Beth-pheret, Jos. 15:26, 27. Hazar-shual, i.e., Fox-court, probably to be sought for in the ruins of Thaly; see rem. on Jos. 15:28. Beersheba, now Bir es Seba; see rem. on Gen. 21:31. Ziklag, at the ancient Asluj, see Jos. 15:31. Mekonah, mentioned only here, and unknown. En-rimmon; see rem. on 1Ch. 4:32. Zareah, Jarmuth, Zanoah, and Adullam in the plains (see Jos. 15:33-35), where were also Lachish and Azekah; see on 2Ch. 11: 9. — In v. 30b the whole region then inhabited by Jews is comprised in the words: "And they dwelt from Beer-sheba (the south-western boundary of Canaan) to the valley of Hinnom, in Jerusalem," through which ran the boundaries of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah (Jos. 15: 8).

Neh. 11:31-35. The dwellings of the Benjamites. V. 31. The children of Benjamin dwelt from Geba to Michmash, Aija, etc. Geba, according to 2Ki. 23: 8 and Josh 14:10, the northern boundary of the kingdom of Judah, is the half-ruined village of Jibia in the Wady el Jib, three leagues north of Jerusalem, and three-quarters of a league north-east of Ramah (Er Ram); see on Jos. 18:24. Michmash (מִכְמָשׁ or מִכְמָם), now Mukhmas, sixty-three minutes

north-east of Geba, and three and a half leagues north of Jerusalem; see rem. on 1Sa. 13: 2. Aija (אֵיָא or אֵיָת, Isa. 10:28), probably one with אֵיָת, Jos. 7: 2, 8: 1f., the situation of which is still a matter of dispute, Van de Velde supposing it to be the present Tell el Hadshar, three-quarters of a league south-east of Beitin; while Schegg, on the contrary, places it in the position of the present Tayibeh, six leagues north of Jerusalem (see Delitzsch on Isa. at 10:28-32, etc., translation), — a position scarcely according with Isa. 10:28f., the road from Tayibeh to Michmash and Geba not leading past Migron (Makhrun), which is not far from Beitin. We therefore abide by the view advocated by Krafft and Strauss, that the ruins of Medinet Chai or Gai, east of Geba, point out the situation of the ancient Ai or Aija; see rem. on Jos. 7: 2. Bethel is the present Beitin; see on Jos. 7: 2. The position of Nob is not as yet certainly ascertained, important objections existing to its identification with the village el-Isawije, between *Anâta* and Jerusalem; comp. Valentiner (in the *Zeitschrift d. deutsch. morgld. Gesellsch.* xii. p. 169), who, on grounds worthy of consideration, transposes Nob to the northern heights before Jerusalem, the road from which leads into the valley of Kidron. Ananiah (אֲנַנְיָהּ), a place named only here, is conjectured by Van de Velde (after R. Schwartz), *Mem.* p. 284, to be the present Beit Hanina (Arab. *ḥn-nâ*), east of Nebi Samwil; against which conjecture even the exchange of א and נ raises objections; comp. Tobler, *Topographie*, ii. p. 414. Hazor of Benjamin, supposed by Robinson (*Palestine*) to be Tell ‘Assur, north of Tayibeh, is much more probably found by Tobler, *Topographie*, ii. p. 400, in Khirbet *Arsûr*, perhaps Assur, Arab. ‘*şûr*, eight minutes eastward of Bir *Nebâla* (between Rama and Gibeon); comp. Van de Velde, *Mem.* p. 319. Ramah, now er *Râm*, two leagues north of Jerusalem; see rem. on Jos. 18:25. Githaim, whither the Beerothites fled, 2Sa. 4: 3, is not yet discovered. Tobler (*dritte Wand.* p. 175) considers it very rash to identify it with the village Katanneh in Wady Mansur. Hadid, Ἀδιδά, see rem. on Ezr. 2:33. Zeboim, in a valley of the same name (1Sa. 13:18), is not yet discovered. Neballat, mentioned only here, is preserved in Beith Nebala, about two leagues north-east of Ludd (Lydda); comp. Rob. *Palestine*, and Van de Velde, *Mem.* p. 336. With respect to Lod and Ono, see rem. on 1Ch. 8:12; and on the valley of craftsmen, comp. 1Ch. 4:14. The omission of Jericho, Gibeon, and Mizpah is the more remarkable, inasmuch as inhabitants of these towns are mentioned as taking part in the building of the wall (Neh. 3: 2, 7).

Neh. 11:36. The enumeration concludes with the remark, “Of the Levites came divisions of Judah to Benjamin,” which can only signify that divisions of Levites who, according to former arrangements, belonged to Judah, now came to Benjamin, i.e., dwelt among the Benjamites.

Ch. 12: 1-43. — Lists of Priests and Levites. Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem.

Neh. 12. The list of the inhabitants of the province, Neh. 11, is followed by lists of the priests and Levites (Neh. 12: 1-26). These different lists are, in point of fact, all connected with the genealogical register of the Israelite population of the whole province, taken by Nehemiah (Neh. 7: 5) for the purpose of enlarging the population of Jerusalem, though the lists of the orders of priests and Levites in the present chapter were made partly at an earlier, and partly at a subsequent period. It is because of this actual connection that they are inserted in the history of the building of the wall of Jerusalem, which terminates with the narrative of the solemn dedication of the completed wall in vv. 27-43.

Neh. 12: 1-26. LISTS OF THE ORDERS OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES. — Vv. 1-9 contain a list of the heads of the priests and Levites who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua. The high priests during five generations are next mentioned by name, vv. 10, 11. Then follow the names of the heads of the priestly houses in the days of Joiakim the high priest; and finally, vv. 22-26, the names of the heads of the Levites at the same period, with titles and subscriptions.

Neh. 12: 1-9. V. 1a contains the title of the *first list*, vv. 1-9. "These are the priests and Levites who went up with Zerubbabel...and Joshua;" comp. Ezr. 2: 1, 2. Then follow, vv. 1b -7, the names of the priests, with the subscription: "These are the heads of the priests and of their brethren, in the days of Joshua." אֲשֶׁר עָמְדוּ still depends on אֲשֶׁר. The brethren of the priests are the Levites, as being their fellow-tribesmen and assistants. Two-and-twenty names of such heads are enumerated, and these reappear, with but slight variations attributable to clerical errors, as names of priestly houses in vv. 12-21, where they are given in conjunction with the names of those priests who, in the days of Joiakim, either represented these houses, or occupied as heads the first position in them. The greater number, viz., 15, of these have already been mentioned as among those who, together with Nehemiah, sealed as heads of their respective houses the agreement to observe the law, Neh. 10. Hence the present chapter appears to be the most appropriate place for comparing with each other the several statements given in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra, concerning the divisions or orders of priests in the period immediately following the return from the captivity, and for discussing the question how the heads and houses of priests enumerated in Neh. 10 and 12 stand related on the one hand to the list of the priestly races who returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua, and on the other to the twenty-four orders of priests instituted by David. For the

purpose of giving an intelligible answer to this question, we first place in juxtaposition the three lists given in Nehemiah, chs. 10 and 12.

Neh. 10: 3-9	Neh. 12: 1-7	Neh. 12:12-21
Priests who sealed the Covenant	Priests who were Heads of their Houses	Priestly Houses <i>their respective Heads</i>
1. Seraiah	1. Seraiah*	Seraiah <i>Meraiah</i>
2. Azariah	2. Jeremiah*	Jeremiah <i>Hananiah</i>
3. Jeremiah	3. Ezra*	Ezra <i>Meshullam</i>
4. Pashur	4. Amariah*	Amariah <i>Jehohanan</i>
5. Amariah	5. Malluch*	Meluchi <i>Jonathan</i>
6. Malchijah	6. Hattush*	— — — —
7. Hattush	7. Shecaniah*	Shebaniah <i>Joseph</i>
8. Shebaniah	8. Rehum*	Harim <i>Adna</i>
9. Malluch	9. Meremoth*	Meraioth <i>Helkai</i>
10. Harim	10. Iddo Idiah	<i>Zecariah</i>
11. Meremoth	11. Ginnethon*	Ginnethon <i>Meshullam</i>
12. Obadiah	12. Abijah*	Abijah <i>Zichri</i>
13. Daniel	13. Miamin*	Miniamin — — —
14. Ginnethon	14. Maadiah*	Moadiah <i>Piltai</i>
15. Baruch	15. Bilgah*	Bilgah <i>Shammua</i>
16. Meshullam	16. Shemaiah*	Shemaiah <i>Jehonathan</i>
17. Abijah	17. Joiarib	Joiarib <i>Mathnai</i>
18. Mijamin	18. Jedaiah	Jedaiah <i>Uzzi</i>
19. Maaziah	19. Sallu	Sallai <i>Kallai</i>
20. Bilgai	20. Amok	Amok <i>Eber</i>
21. Shemaiah	21. Hilkiah	Hilkiah <i>Hashabiah</i>
	22. Jedaiah	Jedaiah <i>Nethaneel</i>

When, in the first place, we compare the two series in Neh. 12, we find the name of the head of the house of Minjamin, and the names both of the house and the head, Hattush, between Meluchi and Shebaniah, omitted. In other respects the two lists agree both in the order and number of the names, with the exception of unimportant variations in the names, as מְלוּכִי (*Chethiv*, v. 14) for מְלוּךְ (v. 2); שְׁבַנְיָה (v. 3) for שְׁבַנְיָה (v. 14, 10: 6); רְחֵם (v. 3), a transposition of חֲרֵם (v. 15, 10: 6); מְרִיּוֹת (v. 15) instead of מְרִמּוֹת (v. 3, 10: 6); עֲדִיָּא (*Chethiv*, v. 16) instead of עֲדוּא (v. 4); מִיָּמִין (v. 5) for מְנַיִמִין (v. 17); מוֹעֲדֵיהָ (v. 17) for מַעֲדֵיהָ (v. 4), or, according to a different pronunciation, מַעֲזֵיהָ (Neh. 10: 9); סְלִי (v. 20) for סְלוּ (v. 7). — If we next compare the two lists in Neh. 12 with that in Neh. 10, we find that of the twenty-two names given (Neh. 12), the fifteen marked thus * occur also in Neh. 10; עֲזַרְיָה, 10: 4, being evidently a clerical error, or another form of עֲזַרְיָה, Neh. 12: 2, 13. Of the

names enumerated in Neh. 10, Pashur, Malchiah, Obadiah, Daniel, Baruch, and Meshullam are wanting in Neh. 12, and are replaced by Iddo and the six last: Joiarib, Jedaiah, Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, and Jedaiah. The name of Eliashib the high priest being also absent, Bertheau seeks to explain this difference by supposing that a portion of the priests refused their signatures because they did not concur in the strict measures of Ezra and Nehemiah. This conjecture would be conceivable, if we found in Neh. 10 that only thirteen orders or heads of priests had signed instead of twenty-two. Since, however, instead of the seven missing names, six others signed the covenant, this cannot be the reason for the difference between the names in the two documents (Neh. 10, 12), which is probably to be found in the time that elapsed between the making of these lists. The date of the list, Neh. 12: 1-7, is that of Zerubbabel and Joshua (B.C. 536); that of the other in Neh. 12, the times of the high priest Joiakim the son of Joshua, i.e., at the earliest, the latter part of the reign of Darius Hystaspis, perhaps even the reign of Xerxes.

How, then, are the two lists in Neh. 12 and that in Neh. 10, agreeing as they do in names, related to the list of the priests who, according to Ezzr. 2:36-39 and Neh. 7:39-42, returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua? The traditional view, founded on the statements of the Talmud,¹³ is, that the four divisions given in Ezzr. 2 and Neh. 7, "the sons of Jedaiah, the sons of Immer, the sons of Pashur and Harim," were the priests of the four (Davidic) orders of Jedaiah, Immer, Malchijah, and Harim (the second, sixteenth, fifth, and third orders of 1Ch. 24). For the sake of restoring, according to the ancient institution, a greater number of priestly orders, the twenty-two orders enumerated in Neh. 12 were formed from these four divisions; and the full number of twenty-four was not immediately completed, only because, according to Ezzr. 2:61 and Neh. 7:63f., three families of priests who could not find their registers returned, as well as those before named, and room was therefore left for their insertion in the twenty-four orders: the first of these three families, viz., Habaiah, being probably identical with the eighth class, Abia; the second, Hakkoz, with the seventh class of the same name. See Oehler's before-cited work. p. 184f. But this view is decidedly erroneous, and the error lies in the identification of the four races of Ezzr. 2:36, on account of the similarity of the names Jedaiah, Immer, and Harim, with those of the second, sixteenth, and third classes of the Davidic division, — thus regarding priestly races as Davidic priestly classes, through mere similarity of name, without reflecting that even the number 4487, given in Ezzr. 2:36f., is incompatible with this assumption. For if these four races were only four orders of priests, each order must have numbered about 1120 males, and the twenty-four orders of the priesthood before the captivity would have yielded the colossal sum of from 24,000 to 26,000 priests. It is true that we have no statement of the numbers of the

priesthood; but if the numbering of the Levites in David's times gave the amount of 38,000 males, the priests of that time could at the most have been 3800, and each of the twenty-four orders would have included in all 150 persons, or at most seventy-five priests of the proper age for officiating. Now, if this number had doubled in the interval of time extending to the close of the captivity, the 4487 who returned with Zerubbabel would have formed more than half of the whole number of priests then living, and not merely the amount of four classes. Hence we cannot but regard Jedaiah, Immer, Pashur, and Harim, of Ezzr. 2:36, as names not of priestly orders, but of great priestly races, and explain the occurrence of three of these names as those of certain of the orders of priests formed by David, by the consideration, that the Davidic orders were names after heads of priestly families of the days of David, and that several of these heads, according to the custom of bestowing upon sons, grandsons, etc., the names of renowned ancestors, bore the names of the founders and heads of the greater races and houses. The classification of the priests in Ezzr. 2:36f. is genealogical, i.e., it follows not the division into orders made by David for the service of the temple, but the genealogical ramification into races and houses. The sons of Jedaiah, Immer, etc., are not the priests belonging to the official orders of Jedaiah, Immer, etc., but the priestly races descended from Jedaiah, etc. The four races (mentioned Ezzr. 2:36, etc.), each of which averaged upwards of 1000 men, were, as appears from Neh. 12: 1-7 and 12, divided into twenty-two houses. From this number of houses, it was easy to restore the old division into twenty-four official orders. That it was not, however, considered necessary to make this artificial restoration of the twenty-four classes immediately, is seen from the circumstances that both under Joiakim, i.e., a generation after Zerubbabel's return (Neh. 12:12-21), only twenty-two houses are enumerated, and under Nehemiah, i.e., after Ezra's return (in Neh. 10), only twenty-one heads of priestly houses sealed the document. Whether, and how the full number of twenty-four was completed, cannot, for want of information, be determined. The statement of Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 14. 7, that David's division into orders continues to this day, affords no sufficient testimony to the fact.

According, then, to what has been said, the difference between the names in the two lists of Neh. 10 and 12 is to be explained simply by the fact, that the names of those who sealed the covenant, Neh. 10, are names neither of orders nor houses, but of heads of houses living in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Of these names, a portion coincides indeed with the names of the orders and houses, while the rest are different. The coincidence or sameness of the names does not, however, prove that the individuals belonged to the house whose name they bore. On the contrary, it appears from Neh. 12:13 and 16, that of two Meshullams, one was the head of the house of Ezra, the other of the house

of Ginnethon; and hence, in Neh. 10, Amariah may have belonged to the house of Malluch, Hattush to the house of Shebaniah, Malluch to the house of Meremoth, etc. In this manner, both the variation and coincidence of the names in Neh. 10 and 12 may be easily explained; the only remaining difficulty being, that in Neh. 10 only twenty-one, not twenty-two, heads of houses are said to have sealed. This discrepancy seems, indeed, to have arisen from the omission of a name in transcription. For the other possible explanation, viz., that in the interval between Joiakim and Nehemiah, the contemporary of Eliashib, one house had died out, is very far-fetched.

Neh. 12: 8, 9. THE HEADS OF LEVITICAL HOUSES IN THE TIME OF JESHUA THE HIGH PRIEST. — Of these names we meet, Neh. 10:10f., with those of Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, and Sherebiah, as of heads who sealed the covenant; while those of Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son (?) of Kadmiel, are again cited in v. 24 as heads of Levites, i.e., of Levitical divisions. The name יהונָדָה does not occur in the other lists of Levites in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and is perhaps miswritten for הוֹדָיָה (Neh. 10:10, 13: 7). Mattaniah is probably Mattaniah the Asaphite, the son of Micah, the son of Zabdi, head of the first band of singers (Neh. 11:17); for he was עַל הַיְדוּת, over the singing of praise. The form הַיְדוּת, which should probably be read according to the Keri הַיְדוּת, is a peculiar formation of an abstract noun; comp. Ewald, § 165, b.

Neh. 12: 9. Bakbukiah and Unni (*Chethiv* עֲנֹ), their brethren, were before them (opposite them) לְמִשְׁמְרוֹת, at the posts of service, i.e., forming in service the opposite choir. V. 24 forbids us to understand מִשְׁמְרוֹת as watch-posts, though the omission of the doorkeepers (comp. Ezr. 2:42) is remarkable. Bakbukiah recurs v. 24; the name Unni is not again met with, though there is no occasion, on this account, for the inapt conjecture of Bertheau, that the reading should be וְעֲנֹ or וְעֲנִי.

Neh. 12:10, 11. A note on the genealogy of the high-priestly line from Jeshua to Jaddua is inserted, so to speak, as a connecting link between the lists of Levites, to explain the statements concerning the dates of their composition, — dates defined by the name of the respective high priests. The lists given vv. 1-9 were of the time of Jeshua; those from v. 12 and onwards, of the days of Joiakim and his successors. The name יוֹנָתָן, as is obvious from vv. 22 and 23, is a clerical error for יוֹחָנָן, Johanan, Greek Ἰωάννης, of whom we are told, Joseph. *Ant.* xi. 7. 1, that he murdered his brother Jesus, and thus gave Bagoses, the general of Artaxerxes Mnemon, an opportunity for taking severe measures against the Jews.

Neh. 12:12-21. Vv. 12-21 contains *the list of the priestly houses and their heads*, which has been already explained in conjunction with that in vv. 1-7. Vv. 22-26. *The list of the heads of the Levites*, vv. 22 and 24, is, according to v. 26, that of the days of Joiakim, and of the days of Nehemiah and Ezra. Whence it follows, that it does not apply only to the time of Joiakim; for though Ezra might indeed have come to Jerusalem in the latter days of Joiakim's high-priesthood, yet Nehemiah's arrival found his successor Eliashib already in office, and the statements of vv. 22 and 23 must be understood accordingly.

Neh. 12:22. "With respect to the Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were recorded the heads of the houses, and also (those) of the priests during the reign of Darius the Persian." To judge from the הלויים with which it commences, this verse seems to be the title of the list of Levites following, while the rest of its contents rather seems adapted for the subscription of the preceding list of priests (vv. 12-21). על מלכות, under the reign. The use of על with reference to time is to be explained by the circumstance that the time, and here therefore the reign of Darius, is regarded as the ground and soil of that which is done in it, as e.g., ἐπὶ νυκτί, upon night = at night-time. Darius is Darius Nothus, the second Persian monarch of that name; see p. 148, where also the meaning of this verse has been already discussed. In v. 23, the original document in which the list of Levites was originally included, is alluded to as the book of the daily occurrences or events of the time, i.e., the public chronicle, a continuation of the former annals of the kingdom. ועד ימי, and also to the days of Johanan, the son of Eliashib. So far did the official records of the chronicle extend. That Nehemiah may have been still living in the days of Johanan, i.e., in the time of his high-priesthood, has been already shown, p. 95. The statements in vv. 22 and 23 are aphoristic, and of the nature of supplementary and occasional remarks.

Neh. 12:24. The names Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, frequently occur as those of heads of Levitical orders: the two first in 10:12f., Ezr. 8:18f.; the two last in v. 8, 10:10, and Ezr. 2:40; and the comparison of these passages obliges us to regard and expunge as a gloss the בן before Kadmiel. Opposite to these four are placed their brethren, whose office it was "to praise (and) to give thanks according to the commandment of David," etc.: comp. 1Ch. 16: 4, 23:30, 2Ch. 5:13; and לעמת משמר, במצות ד', 2Ch. 29:25. משמר, ward opposite ward, elsewhere used of the gatekeepers, 1Ch. 26:16, is here applied to the position of the companies of singers in divine worship. The names of the brethren, i.e., of the Levitical singers, follow, v. 25, where the first three names must be separated from those which follow, and combined with v. 24. This is obvious from the consideration, that Mattaniah and Bakbukiah are

mentioned in Neh. 11:17 as presidents of two companies of singers, and with them Abda the Jeduthunite, whence we are constrained to suppose that עבְדָּיהּ is only another form for עבְדָּא of Neh. 11:17. According, then, to what has been said, the division into verses must be changed, and v. 25 should begin with the name מְשָׁלָם. Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub are chiefs of the doorkeepers; the two last names occur as such both in Neh. 11:19 and Ezer. 2:42, and even so early as 1Ch. 9:17, whence we perceive that these were ancient names of races of Levitical doorkeepers. In Ezer. 2:42 and 1Ch. 9:17, שְׁלוֹם, answering to מְשָׁלָם of the present verse, is also named with them. The combination מְשָׁמֵר שְׁמֵרִים שְׁמֵרִים שְׁמֵרִים is striking: we should at least have expected מְשָׁמֵר שְׁמֵרִים שְׁמֵרִים, because, while שְׁמֵרִים cannot be combined with מְשָׁמֵר, שְׁמֵרִים may well be so; hence we must either transpose the words as above, or read according to Neh. 11:19, שְׁמֵרִים בְּשַׁעֲרֵים. In the latter case, בְּשַׁעֲרֵים is more closely defined by the apposition בְּאַסְפֵי הַשַּׁעֲרֵים: at the doors, viz., at the treasure-chambers of the doors. On אַסְפֵים, see rem. on 1Ch. 26:15, 17.

Neh. 12:26. V. 26 is the final subscription of the two lists in vv. 12-21 and vv. 24, 25.

Neh. 12:27-43. THE DEDICATION OF THE WALL OF JERUSALEM. — The measures proposed for increasing the numbers of the inhabitants of Jerusalem having now been executed (Neh. 7: 5 and 11: 1f.), the restored wall of circumvallation was solemnly dedicated. Vv. 27-29 treat of the preparations for this solemnity.

Neh. 12:27. At the dedication (i.e., at the time of, בְּ denoting nearness of time) they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to keep the dedication. Only a portion of the Levites dwelt in Jerusalem (Neh. 11:15-18); the rest dwelt in places in the neighbourhood, as is more expressly stated in vv. 28 and 29. וְשִׂמְחָה, to keep the dedication *and* joy, is not suitable, chiefly on account of the following וּבְתוֹדוֹת, *and* with songs of praise. We must either read בְּשִׂמְחָה, dedication with joy (comp. Ezer. 6:16), or expunge, with the LXX and Vulgate, the ו before בְּ. בְּ must be repeated before מִצְלָתֵים from the preceding words. On the subject, comp. 1Ch. 13: 8, 15:16, and elsewhere.

Neh. 12:28, 29. And the sons of the singers, i.e., the members of the three Levitical companies of singers (comp. v. 25 and 11:17), gathered themselves together, both out of the Jordan valley round about Jerusalem, and the villages (or fields, חֲצָרִים, comp. Lev. 25:31) of Netophathi, and from Beth-Gilgal, etc.

הַכְּפָר does not mean the district round Jerusalem, the immediate neighbourhood of the city (Bertheau). For, according to established usage, הַכְּפָר is used to designate the Jordan valley (see rem. on 3:22); and יְרוּשָׁלַיִם סְבִיבוֹת is here added to limit the כְּפָר, — the whole extent of the valley of the Jordan from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee not being intended, but only its southern portion in the neighbourhood of Jericho, where it widens considerably westward, and which might be said to be round about Jerusalem. The villages of Netophathi (comp. 1Ch. 9:16) are the villages or fields in the vicinity of Netopha, i.e., probably the modern village of Beit Nettif, about thirteen miles south-west of Jerusalem: comp. Rob. *Palestine*; Tobler, *dritte Wand.* p. 117, etc.; and V. de Velde, *Mem.* p. 336. Bertheau regards Beth-Gilgal as the present Jiljilia, also called Gilgal, situate somewhat to the west of the road from Jerusalem to Nablous (Sichem), about seventeen miles north of the former town. This view, is, however, questionable, Jiljilia being apparently too distant to be reckoned among the סְבִיבוֹת of Jerusalem. “And from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth.” With respect to Geba, see rem. on 11:31. The situation of Azmaveth is unknown; see rem. on Ezr. 2:24 (p. 22). For the singers had built them villages in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and dwelt, therefore, not in the before-named towns, but in villages near them.

Neh. 12:30. The dedication began with the purification of the people, the gates, and the wall, by the priests and Levites, after they had purified themselves. This was probably done, judging from the analogy of 2Ch. 29:20, by the offering of sin-offerings and burnt-offerings, according to some special ritual unknown to us, as sacrifices of purification and dedication. This was followed by the central-point of the solemnity, a procession of two bands of singers upon the wall (vv. 31-42).

Neh. 12:31. Nehemiah brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of those who gave thanks, and two processions. These went each upon the wall in different directions, and stopped opposite each other at the house of God. The princes of Judah are the princes of the whole community, — Judah being used in the sense of יְהוּדִים, 3:34. לְחֻמָּה מֵעַל, upwards to the wall, so that they stood upon the wall. הָעֵמִיד, to place, i.e., to cause to take up a position, so that those assembled formed two companies or processions. תְּוֹדָה, acknowledgement, praise, thanks, and then thankofferings, accompanied by the singing of psalms and thanksgivings. Hence is derived the meaning: companies of those who gave thanks, in vv. 31, 38, 40. וַתֵּלֶכְתָּ, *et processiones*, solemn processions, is added more closely to define תְּוֹדָה. The company of those who gave thanks consisted of a number of Levitical singers, behind whom walked the princes of the people, the priests,

and Levites. At the head of one procession went Ezra the scribe (v. 36), with one half of the nobles; at the head of the second, Nehemiah with the other half (38). The one company and procession went to the right upon the wall. Before **לְיָמִין** we must supply, “one band went” (**הַתּוֹדָה הָאַחַת הַיְּמִינִית**), as is evident partly from the context of the present verse, partly from v. 38. These words were probably omitted by a clerical error caused by the similarity of **תְּהִלְכַת** to **הוֹלְכַת**. Thus the first procession went to the right, i.e., in a southerly direction, upon the wall towards the dung-gate (see rem. on 3:14); the second, v. 38, went over against the first (**לְמֵאֵל**), i.e., in an opposite direction, and therefore northwards, past the tower of the furnaces, etc. The starting-point of both companies and processions is not expressly stated, but may be easily inferred from the points mentioned, and can have been none other than the valley-gate, the present Jaffa gate (see rem. on Neh. 2:13). Before a further description of the route taken by the first company, the individuals composing the procession which followed it are enumerated in vv. 32-36. After them, i.e., after the first company of them that gave thanks, went Hoshaiah and half of the princes of Judah. Hoshaiah was probably the chief of the one half of these princes. The seven names in vv. 33 and 34 are undoubtedly the names of the princes, and the **ו** before **עֲזַרְיָה** is explicative: even, namely. Bertheau’s remark, “After the princes came the orders of priests, Azariah,” etc., is incorrect. It is true that of these seven names, five occur as names of priests, and heads of priestly houses, viz.: Azariah, Neh. 10: 3; Ezra, Neh. 12: 2; Meshullam, Neh. 10: 8; Shemaiah, Neh. 10: 9 and Neh. 12: 6; and Jeremiah, Neh. 12: 2. But even if these individuals were heads of priestly orders, their names do not here stand for their orders. Still less do Judah and Benjamin denote the half of the laity of Judah and Benjamin, as Bertheau supposes, and thence infers that first after the princes came two or three orders of priests, then half of the laity of Judah and Benjamin, and then two more orders of priests. V. 38, which is said to give rise to this view, by no means confirms it. It is true that in this verse **הַצִּי הָעָם**, besides Nehemiah, are stated to have followed the company of those who gave thanks; but that **הָעָם** in this verse is not used to designate the people as such, but is only a general expression for the individuals following the company of singers, is placed beyond doubt by v. 40, where **הָעָם** is replaced by **הַסִּנְגָּנִים** **הַצִּי**; while, beside the half of the rulers, with Nehemiah, only priests with trumpets and Levites with stringed instruments (v. 41) are enumerated as composing the second procession. Since, then, the priests with trumpets and Levites with musical instruments are mentioned in the first procession (vv. 35 and 36), the names enumerated in vv. 33 and 34 can be only those of the one half of the **הַסִּנְגָּנִים** of the people, i.e., the one half of the princes of Judah. The princes of Judah, i.e., of the Jewish community, consisted not only of laymen,

but included also the princes, i.e., heads of priestly and Levitical orders; and hence priestly and Levitical princes might also be among the seven whose names are given in vv. 33 and 34. A strict severance, moreover, between lay and priestly princes cannot be made by the names alone; for these five names, which may designate priestly orders, pertain in other passages to laymen, viz.: Azariah, in 3:23; Ezra, as of the tribe of Judah, 1Ch. 4:17; Meshullam, Neh. 3: 4, 10:21, and elsewhere; Shemaiah, Ezr. 6:13, 10:31, 1Ch. 3:22, 4:37 (of Judah), 5: 4 (a Reubenite), and other passages (this name being very usual; comp. Simonis *Onomast.* p. 546); Jeremiah, 1Ch. 5:24 (a Manassite), 12: 4 (a Benjamite), 12:10 (a Gadite). Even the name Judah is met with among the priests (v. 36), and among the Levites, v. 8, comp. also 11: 9, and that of Benjamin, 3:33 and Ezr. 10:32. In the present verses, the two names are not those of tribes, but of individuals, *nomina duorum principum* (R. Sal.).

Neh. 12:35. The princes of the congregation were followed by certain “of the sons of the priests” (seven in number, to judge from v. 41) with trumpets; also by Jonathan the son of Zechariah, who, as appears from the subsequent וְיִשָּׁרְיָהוּ, was at the head of the Levitical musicians, i.e., the section of them that followed this procession. His brethren, i.e., the musicians of his section, are enumerated in v. 36, — eight names being given, among which are a Shemaiah and a Judah. “With the musical instruments of David, the man of God:” comp. 2Ch. 29:26; 1Ch. 15:16, 23: 5; Ezr. 3:10. “And Ezra the scribe before them,” viz., before the individuals enumerated from v. 32, immediately after the company of those who gave thanks, and before the princes, like Nehemiah, v. 38.

Neh. 12:37. After this insertion of the names of the persons who composed the procession, the description of the route it took is continued. From “upon the wall, towards the dung-gate (31), it passed on” to the fountain-gate; and בְּנֵדָם, before them (i.e., going straight forwards; comp. Jos. 5: 6, 20, Amo. 4: 3), they went up by the stairs of the city of David, the ascent of the wall, up over the house of David, even unto the water-gate eastward. These statements are not quite intelligible to us. The stairs of the city of David are undoubtedly “the stairs that lead down from the city of David” (Neh. 3:15). These lay on the eastern slope of Zion, above the fountain-gate and the Pool of Siloam. לַחֲוֹמָה הַמַּעֲלָה might be literally translated “the ascent to the wall,” as by Bertheau, who takes the sense as follows: (The procession) went up upon the wall by the ascent formed by these steps at the northern part of the eastern side of Zion. According to this, the procession would have left the wall by the stairs at the eastern declivity of Zion, to go up upon the wall again by this ascent. There is, however, no reason for this leaving of the wall, and that which Bertheau adduces is connected with his erroneous transposition of the fountain-gate to

the place of the present dung-gate. **הַמַּעֲלָה לַחֹמָה** seems to be the part of the wall which, according to 3:19, lay opposite the **עֵלַת הַנֶּשֶׁק הַמְּקֻצָּוֶה**, a place on the eastern edge of Zion, where the wall was carried over an elevation of the ground, and where consequently was an ascent in the wall. Certainly this cannot be insisted upon, because the further statement **מַעַל לְבֵית דָּוִד** is obscure, the preposition **מַעַל לְ** admitting of various interpretations, and the situation of the house of David being uncertain. Bertheau, indeed, says: “**וְעַד** in the following words corresponds with **מַעַל** before **לְבֵית דָּוִד**: a wall over the house of David is not intended; and the meaning is rather, that after they were come as far as the wall, they then passed over the house of David, i.e., the place called the house of David, even to the water-gate.” But the separation of **מַעַל** from **לְבֵית דָּוִד** is decidedly incorrect, **מַעַל לְ** being in the preceding and following passages always used in combination, and forming one idea: comp. v. 31 (twice) and vv. 38 and 39. Hence it could scarcely be taken here in v. 37 in a different sense from that which it has in 31 and 38. Not less objectionable is the notion that the house of David is here put for a place called the house of David, on which a palace of David formerly stood, and where perhaps the remains of an ancient royal building might still have been in existence. By the house of David is meant, either the royal palace built (according to Thenius) by Solomon at the north-eastern corner of Zion, opposite the temple, or some other building of David, situate south of this palace, on the east side of Zion. The former view is more probable than the latter. We translate **מַעַל לְבֵית דָּוִד**, past the house of David. For, though **מַעַל לַחֹמָה** must undoubtedly be so understood as to express that the procession went upon the wall (which must be conceived of as tolerably broad), yet **מַעַל לַמִּגְדָּל**, v. 38, can scarcely mean that the procession also went up over the tower which stood near the wall. In the case of the gates, too, **מַעַל לְ** cannot mean over upon; for it is inconceivable that this solemn procession should have gone over the roof of the gates; and we conclude, on the contrary, that it passed beside the gates and towers. Whether the route taken by the procession from the house of David to the water-gate in the east were straight over the ridge of Ophel, which ran from about the horse-gate to the water-gate, or upon the wall round Ophel, cannot be determined, the description being incomplete. After the house of David, no further information as to its course is given; its halting-place, the water-gate, being alone mentioned.

The route taken by the second company is more particularly described. — Vv. 38 and 39. “And the second company of them that gave thanks, which went over against, and which I and the (other) half of the people followed, (went) upon the wall past the tower of the furnaces, as far as the broad wall; and past

the gate of Ephraim, and past the gate of the old (wall), and past the fish-gate, and past the tower Hananeel and the tower Hammeah, even to the sheep-gate: and then took up its station at the prison-gate.” לְמוֹאֵל (in the form with מ only here; elsewhere מוֹל, Deu. 1: 1, or מוֹל), over against, opposite, sc. the first procession, therefore towards the opposite side, i.e., to the left; the first having gone to the right, viz., from the valley-gate northwards upon the northern wall. וְאֲנִי אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְגוֹ' (and I behind them) is a circumstantial clause, which we may take relatively. The order of the towers, the lengths of wall, and the gates, exactly answer to the description in Neh. 3: 1-12, with these differences: — *a*. The description proceeds from the sheep-gate in the east to the valley-gate in the west; while the procession moved in the opposite direction, viz., from the valley-gate to the sheep-gate. *b*. In the description of the building of the wall, Neh. 3, the gate of Ephraim is omitted (see rem. on 3: 8, p. 114). *c*. In the description, the prison-gate at which the procession halted is also unmentioned, undoubtedly for the same reason as that the gate of Ephraim is omitted, viz., that not having been destroyed, there was no need to rebuild it. שַׁעַר הַמִּצְרָה is translated, gate of the prison or watch: its position is disputed; but it can scarcely be doubted that הַמִּצְרָה is the court of the prison mentioned 3:25 (הַצֵּר הַמִּצְרָה), by or near the king's house. Starting from the assumption that the two companies halted or took up positions opposite each other, Hupfeld (in his before-cited work, p. 321) transposes both the court of the prison and the king's house to the north of the temple area, where the citadel. בֵּיִרָה, βῆρις, was subsequently situated. But “this being forbidden,” as Arnold objects (in his before-cited work, p. 628), “by the order in the description of the building of the wall, 3:25, which brings us absolutely to the southern side,” Bertheau supposes that the two processions which would arrive at the same moment at the temple, — the one from the north-east, the other from the south-east, — here passed each other, and afterwards halted opposite each other in such wise, that the procession advancing from the south-west stood on the northern side, and that from the north-west at the southern side of the temple area. This notion, however, having not the slightest support from the text, nor any reason appearing why the one procession should pass the other, it must be regarded as a mere expedient. In v. 40 it is merely said, the two companies stood in the house of God; and not even that they stood opposite each other, the one on the north, the other on the south side of the temple. Thus they may have stood side by side, and together have praised the Lord. Hence we place the prison-gate also on the south-eastern corner of the temple area, and explain the name from the circumstance that a street ran from this gate over Ophel to the court of the prison near the king's house upon Zion, which, together with the gate to which it led, received its name from the court of the prison. Not far from the prison-gate lay the water-gate in the east, near which was an open space in the

direction of the temple area (Neh. 8: 1). On this open space the two companies met, and took the direction towards the temple, entering the temple area from this open space, that they might offer their thank-offerings before the altar of burnt-offering (v. 43). Besides, the remark upon the position of the two companies (v. 40) anticipates the course of events, the procession following the second company being first described in vv. 40b -42. At the end of v. 40 the statement of v. 38 — I and the half of the people behind — is again taken up in the words: I and the half of the rulers with me. The **אֲנִי וְחֵצְיָם** are, as in v. 32, the princes of the congregation, who, with Nehemiah, headed the procession that followed the company of those who gave thanks. Then followed (v. 41) seven priests with trumpets, whose names are given, answering to the sons of the priests with trumpets (v. 36a) in the first procession. These names are all met with elsewhere of other persons. These were succeeded, as in v. 36, by eight Levites — eight individuals, and not eight divisions (Bertheau). And the singers gave forth sound, i.e., of voices and instruments, — whether during the circuit or after the two companies had taken their places at the temple, is doubtful. The president of the Levitical singers was Jezrahiah.

Neh. 12:43. The solemnity terminated with the offering of great sacrifices and a general festival of rejoicing. In the matter of sacrificing, the person of Nehemiah would necessarily recede; hence he relates the close of the proceedings objectively, and speaks in the third person, as he had done when speaking of the preparations for them, v. 27, etc., only using the first (vv. 31, 38, 40) person when speaking of what was appointed by himself, or of his own position. The **אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ** were chiefly thank-offerings which, terminating in feasting upon the sacrifices, — and these feasts in which the women and children participated, — contributed to the enhancement of the general joy, the joy which God had given them by the success He had accorded to their work of building their wall. For a description of their rejoicing, comp. 2Ch. 20:27, Ezr. 6:22, and 3:13.

III. Nehemiah's Operations During his Second Sojourn in Jerusalem. — Ch. 12:44-13:31.

Neh. 12:44-13:31. The joint efforts of Nehemiah and Ezra succeeded both in restoring the enactments of the law for the performance and maintenance of the public worship, and in carrying out the separation of the community from strangers, especially by the dissolution of unlawful marriages (Neh. 12:44-13: 3). When Nehemiah, however, returned to the king at Babylon, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, and remained there some time, the abuses which had been abolished were again allowed by the people. During Nehemiah's absence, Eliashib the priest prepared a chamber in the fore-court of the temple, as a

dwelling for his son-in-law Tobiah the Ammonite. The delivery of their dues to the Levites (the first-fruits and tenths) was omitted, and the Sabbath desecrated by field-work and by buying and selling in Jerusalem; Jews married Ashdodite, Ammonitish, and Moabitish wives; even a son of the high priest Joiada allying himself by marriage with Sanballat the Horonite. All these illegal acts were energetically opposed by Nehemiah at his return to Jerusalem, when he strove both to purify the congregation from foreigners, and to restore the appointments of the law with respect to divine worship (Neh. 13: 4-31).

The narration of these events and of the proceedings of Nehemiah in the last section of this book, is introduced by a brief summary (in Neh. 12:44-13: 3) of what was done for the ordering of divine worship, and for the separation of Israel from strangers; and this introduction is so annexed to what precedes, not only by the formula **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא** (Neh. 12:33 and 13: 1), but also by its contents, that it might be regarded as a summary of what Nehemiah had effected during his first stay at Jerusalem. It is not till the connective **מִזֶּה וְלִפְנֵי**, “and before this” (Neh. 13: 4), with which the recital of what occurred during Nehemiah’s absence from Jerusalem, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, begins, that we perceive that this description of the restored legal appointments relates not only to the time before the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, but applies also to that of Nehemiah’s second stay at Jerusalem, and bears only the appearance of an introduction, being in fact a brief summary of all that Nehemiah effected both before and after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes. This is a form of statement which, as already remarked, p. 96, is to be explained by the circumstance that Nehemiah did not compile this narrative of his operations till the evening of his days.

Neh. 12:44-13: 3. THE REFORMATIONS IN WORSHIP AND IN SOCIAL LIFE EFFECTED BY NEHEMIAH. — Vv. 44-47. *Appointments concerning divine worship.* V. 44. And at that time were certain appointed over the chambers of store-places for the heave-offerings, the first-fruits, and the tenths, to gather into them, according to the fields of the cities, the portions appointed by the law for the priests and Levites. Though the definition of time **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא** corresponds with the **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא** of v. 43, it is nevertheless used in a more general sense, and does not refer, as in v. 43, to the day of the dedication of the wall, but only declares that what follows belongs chiefly to the time hitherto spoken of. **יוֹם** means, not merely a day of twelve or twenty-four hours, but very frequently stands for the time generally speaking at which anything occurs, or *certum quoddam temporis spatium*; and it is only from the context that we can perceive whether **יוֹם** is used in its narrower or more extended meaning. Hence **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא** is often used in the historical and prophetic books, *de die*,

or *de tempore modo memorato*, in contradistinction to הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, the time present to the narrator; comp. 1Sa. 27: 6, 30:25, and the discussion in Gesen. *Thes.* p. 369. That the expression refers in the present verse not to any particular day, but to the time in question generally, is obvious from the whole statement, vv. 44-47. נְשֻׁכוֹת לְאוֹצְרוֹת are not chambers for the treasures, i.e., treasure-chambers; but both here and 13:12, אוֹצְרוֹת signify places where stores are kept, magazines; hence: these are chambers for store-places for the heave-offerings, etc.; comp. 10:38-40. With respect to נְשֻׁכוֹת, see rem. on 3:30. לְשָׂדֵי הָעָרִים, according to the fields of the cities, according to the delivery of the tenth of the crop from the fields of the different cities. These contributions necessitated the appointment of individuals to have the care of the store-chambers; “for Judah rejoiced in the priests and the Levites who were ministering,” and therefore contributed willingly and abundantly “the portions of the law,” i.e., the portions prescribed in the law. The form מְנַאוֹת is exchanged for מְנִיּוֹת, v. 47 and 13:10. הָעֹמְדִים is a shorter expression for הָעֹמְדִים לְפָנֵי יְהוָה, Deu. 10: 8: standing before the Lord, i.e., ministering.

Neh. 12:45. And they cared for the care of their God, etc.; i.e., they observed all that was to be observed, both with respect to God and with respect to purification, i.e., they faithfully and punctually performed their office. On שָׁמַר מִשְׁמֶרֶת, see rem. on Gen. 26: 5 and Lev. 8:35. “And (so also) the singers and doorkeepers,” i.e., they, too, observed the duties incumbent on them. This must be mentally supplied from the beginning of the verse. “According to the commandment of David and of Solomon his son;” comp. 2Ch. 8:14 and 1Ch. 24:26. ו must be inserted before שְׁלֹמֹה, as in the LXX and Vulgate, after the analogy of 2Ch. 33: 7 and 35: 4; for an asyndeton would be here too harsh. As ו is here omitted, so does it also appear superfluously before אָסָף, v. 46, probably by a clerical error. The verse can be only understood as saying: “for in the days of David, Asaph was of old chief of the singers, and of the songs of praise, and of the thanksgiving unto God.” ו before Asaph is here out of place; for to take it as introducing a conclusion: in the days of David, therefore, was Asaph...seems unnatural. The ו probably came into the text through a reminiscence of 2Ch. 29:30 and 35:15. The matter, however, of these passages is consistent with the naming of David *and* Asaph, while such a co-ordination is unsuitable in the present passage. The Masoretes have indeed attempted to make sense of the words by altering the singular ראשׁ into the plural ראשיׁ; but the Keri ראשיׁ is nothing more than a worthless conjecture, arising partly from the unsuitableness of ו before אָסָף, and partly from the consideration that Henan and Ethan were, as well as Asaph, chiefs of bands of singers. Nehemiah,

however, was not concerned in this passage about exactness of statement, — the mention of Asaph as chief of the singers being quite sufficient for the purpose of his remark, that from the times of David onward orders of singers had existed. — In v. 47 this subject is concluded by the general statement that all Israel, i.e., the whole community, in the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, gave the portions prescribed in the law for the ministers of the sanctuary, singers, doorkeepers, Levites, and priests. **מְקַדְּשִׁים**, they were sanctifying, i.e., *consecrating*. **הַקְּדִישׁ**, to sanctify, said of the bringing of gifts and dues to the ministers of the sanctuary; comp. 1Ch. 26:27, Lev. 27:14. On the matter itself, comp. 10:38f. and Num. 18:26-29.

Neh. 13: 1-3. *Public reading of the law, and separation from strangers.* — V. 1. At a public reading of the law, it was found written therein, that no Ammonite or Moabite should come into the congregation of God, because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam to curse them, though God turned the curse into a blessing. This command, found in Deu. 23: 4-6, is given in full as to matter, though slightly abbreviated as to form. The sing. **יִשְׁבֵּר** relates to Balak king of Moab, Num. 22: 2f., and the suffix of **עֲלֵיו** to Israel as a nation; see the explanation of Deu. 23: 4f.

Neh. 13: 3. This law being understood, all strangers were separated from Israel. **עֲרָב** is taken from Exo. 12:38, where it denotes the mixed multitude of non-Israelitish people who followed the Israelites at their departure from Egypt. The word is here transferred to strangers of different heathen nationalities living among the Israelites. The date of the occurrence here related cannot be more precisely defined from the **בְּיָוִם הַהוּא**. Public readings of the law frequently took place in those days, as is obvious from Neh. 8 and 9, where we learn that in the seventh month the book of the law was publicly read, not only on the first and second days, but also daily during the feast of tabernacles, and again on the day of prayer and fasting on the twenty-fourth of the month. It appears, however, from **לִפְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ**, v. 4, compared with v. 6, that the reading vv. 1-3 took place in the interval between Nehemiah's first and second stay at Jerusalem. This view is not opposed by the facts mentioned vv. 4f. and 23f. The separation of the **עֲרָב** could not be carried out at once; and hence, notwithstanding repeated resolutions to sever themselves from strangers (Neh. 9: 2, 10:31), cases to the contrary might be discovered, and make fresh separations needful.

Neh. 13: 4-31. NEHEMIAH, ON HIS RETURN TO JERUSALEM, REFORMS THE IRREGULARITIES THAT HAD BROKEN OUT DURING HIS ABSENCE. — Vv. 4-9. While Nehemiah was at Babylon with King Artaxerxes, Eliashib the high priest

had given up to his relative, Tobiah the Ammonite (Neh. 2:10, 3:35, and elsewhere), a large chamber in the temple, i.e., in the fore-court of the temple (v. 7), probably for his use as a dwelling when he visited Jerusalem (see rem. on v. 8). On his return, Nehemiah immediately cast all the furniture of Tobiah out of this chamber, purified the chambers, and restored them to their proper use as a magazine for the temple stores. לְפָנַי מִזֶּדָה, before this (comp. Ewald, § 315, c), refers to the beforementioned separation of the עֵרֶב from Israel (v. 3).

Eliashib the priest is probably the high priest of that name (Neh. 3: 1, 12:10, 22). This may be inferred from the particular: set over (he being set over) the chambers of the house of our God; for such oversight of the chambers of the temple would certainly be entrusted to no simple priest, though this addition shows that this oversight did not absolutely form part of the high priest's office. For גָּזַן, in the sense of to set, to place over, comp. 1Ki. 2:35; the construction with בַּיִת instead of עַל is, however, unusual, but may be derived from the local

signification of בַּיִת, upon, over. Ewald and Bertheau are for reading לְשֹׁכֵת instead of the sing. לְשֹׁכֵת, because in v. 5 it is not הַלְשֹׁכָה that is spoken of, but a large chamber. לְשֹׁכֵת may, however, be also understood collectively.

Eliashib, being a relation of Tobiah (קָרוֹב like Rut. 2:20), prepared him a chamber. The predicate of the sentence, v. 4, follows in v. 5 with וַיֵּשֶׁב, in the form of a conclusion following the accessory sentence of the subject. How Tobiah was related to Eliashib is nowhere stated. Bertheau conjectures that it was perhaps only through the circumstance that Johanan, the son of Tobiah, had married a daughter of Meshullam ben Berechiah (Neh. 6:18), who, according to 3:30, was a priest or Levite, and might have been nearly related to the high priest. "A great chamber," perhaps made so by throwing several chambers into one, as older expositors have inferred from v. 9, according to which Nehemiah, after casting out the goods of Tobiah, had the chambers (plural) cleansed. The statement also in v. 5b, that there (in this great chamber) were aforetime laid up not only the meat-offerings (i.e., oil and flour, the materials for them), the incense, and the sacred vessels, but also the tithe of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, and the heave-offerings of the priests, seems to confirm this view. This tenth is designated as מִצְוֹת הַלֵּוִיִּם, the command of the Levites, i.e., what was apportioned to the Levites according to the law, the legal dues for which מִשְׁבֵּט is elsewhere usual; comp. Deu. 18: 3, 1Sa. 2:13. The heave-offering of the priest is the tenth of their tenth which the Levites had to contribute, 10:39.

Neh. 13: 6. In all this, i.e., while this was taking place, I was not in Jerusalem; for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes I went to the king, and after the lapse of some days I entreated the king (נִשְׂאל like 1Sa. 20: 6, 28). What he

entreated is not expressly stated; but it is obvious from what follows, “and I came to Jerusalem,” that it was permission to return to Judea. Even at his first journey to Jerusalem, Nehemiah only requested leave to make a temporary sojourn there, without giving up his post of royal cup-bearer; comp. 2: 5f. Hence, after his twelve years’ stay in Jerusalem, he was obliged to go to the king and remain some time at court, and then to beg for fresh leave of absence. How long he remained there cannot be determined, — לָקַץ יָמִים, after the lapse of days, denoting no definite interval; comp. Gen. 4: 3. The view of several expositors, that יָמִיָּם means a year, is devoid of proof. The stay of Nehemiah at court must, as already remarked, p. 94, have lasted longer than a year, since so many illegal acts on the part of the community as Nehemiah on his return discovered to have taken place, could not have occurred in so short a time. Artaxerxes is here called king of Babylon, because the Persian kings had conquered the kingdom of Babylon, and by this conquest obtained dominion over the Jews. Nehemiah uses this title to express also the fact that he had travelled to Babylon.

Neh. 13: 7. At his return he directed his attention to the evil committed by Eliashib in preparing a chamber in the court of the temple (חֲבִיטָה like Ezr. 8:15) for Tobiah.

Neh. 13: 8, 9. This so greatly displeased him, that he cast out all the household stuff of Tobiah, and commanded the chamber to be purified, and the vessels of the house of God, the meat-offering and the frankincense, and probably the tenths and heave-offerings also, the enumeration being here only abbreviated, to be again brought into it. From the words *household* stuff, it appears that Tobiah used the chamber as a dwelling when he came from time to time to Jerusalem.

Neh. 13:10-14. The payment of dues to the Levites, and the delivery of the tenths and first-fruits, had also been omitted. — V. 10. “And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given; and the Levites and singers who had to do the work, were fled every one to his field.” The Levites, i.e., the assistants of the priests, the singers, and also the porters, who are not expressly mentioned in this passage, were accustomed to receive during the time of their ministry their daily portions of the tenths and first-fruits (Neh. 12:47). When then these offerings were discontinued, they were obliged to seek their maintenance from the fields of the towns and villages in which they dwelt (Neh. 12:28f.), and to forsake the service of the house of God. This is the meaning of the בָּרַח, to flee to the fields.

Neh. 13:11. “Then I contended with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken?” It was the duty of the **סִגְנִיִּים**, the heads of the community (comp. Neh. 2:16), to see that the tithes, etc., were regularly brought to the house of God. Hence Nehemiah rebukes them by asking: Why is the house of God forsaken? i.e., through the non-delivery of the dues. On **נְעֻב**, comp. 10:40. This rebuke made the impression desired. Nehemiah assembled the Levites and set them in their place (comp. Neh. 9: 3, 2Ch. 30:16, 35:10), i.e., he brought them back to the performance of their official duties, and (v. 12) all Judah (the whole community) brought the tithe of the corn, etc., into the store-chambers of the temple; comp. 10:38f. 2Ch. 11:11.

Neh. 13:13. “And I appointed as managers of the stores (or storehouses, i.e., magazines) Shemaiah the priest,” etc. **וְאוֹצְרָה**, Hiphil, for **אוֹצְרָה**, is a denominative from **אוֹצַר**, to set some one over the treasures. Whether Shemaiah and Zadok are the individuals of these names mentioned in 3:30, 29, cannot be determined. Zadok is called a **סוֹפֵר**, a writer or secretary, not a scribe in the Jewish sense of that word. A Pedaiah occurs 8: 4. **וְעַל יָדָם**, and at their hand Hanan, probably as an under-steward. These four were placed in this position because they were esteemed faithful. **וְעַלֵּיהֶם**, and it was (incumbent) on them (comp. 1Ch. 9:27, Ezr. 10:12) to distribute to their brethren, i.e., to the priests and Levites, the portions due to them (v. 10). Nehemiah concludes his account of this matter with the wish, that God may remember him concerning it (comp. 5:19), and not wipe out the kindnesses which he has shown to the house of God and its watches. **תִּמְחָה**, abbreviated from the Hiphil **תִּמְחָה**, to cause to wipe out. **חֲסָדִים** like 2Ch. 35:26. **מִשְׁמָרִים** (the form occurring only here), properly watches, watch-posts, here the office of attending on the service of the temple.

Neh. 13:15-22. FIELD-WORK AND TRADING ON THE SABBATH DONE AWAY WITH. — V. 15. In those days, i.e., when he was occupied with the arrangements for worship, Nehemiah saw in Judah (in the province) some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses, and also wine, grapes, and figs, and all kinds of burdens, and bringing it to Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day. The **מִבְּיָאִים** is again taken up by the second **וּמִבְּיָאִים**, and more closely defined by the addition: to Jerusalem. Robinson describes an ancient wine-press in his *Biblical Researches*, p. 178. On **כָּל-מִשְׂאָה**, comp. Jer. 17:21f. **וְאָעִיד**, and I testified (against them), i.e., warned them on the day wherein they sold victuals. **צִיד**, food, victuals; Ps. 132:15, Jos. 9: 5, 14. He warned them no longer to sell victuals on the Sabbath-day. Bertheau, on the contrary, thinks that Nehemiah saw how the market people in

the neighbourhood of Jerusalem started while it was still the Sabbath, not for the purpose of selling during that day, but for that of being early in the market on the next day, or the next but one. The text, however, offers no support to such a notion. In v. 16 it is expressly said that selling took place in Jerusalem on the Sabbath; and the very bringing thither of wine, grapes, etc., on the Sabbath, presupposes that the sale of these articles was transacted on that day.

Neh. 13:16. Tyrians also were staying therein, bringing fish and all kind of ware (מִכָּר), and sold it on the Sabbath to the sons of Judah and in Jerusalem. יָשַׁב is by most expositors translated, to dwell; but it is improbable that Tyrians would at that time dwell or settle at Jerusalem: hence יָשַׁב here means to sit, i.e., to stay awhile undisturbed, to tarry.

Neh. 13:17, 18. Nehemiah reproved the nobles of Judah for this profanation of the Sabbath, reminding them how their fathers (forefathers) by such acts (as rebuked e.g., by Jeremiah, Jer. 17:21f.) had brought upon the people and the city great evil, i.e., the misery of their former exile and present oppression; remarking in addition, “and ye are bringing more wrath upon Israel, profaning the Sabbath,” i.e., you are only increasing the wrath of God already lying upon Israel, by your desecration of the Sabbath. Comp. on the last thought, Ezzr. 10:10, 14. He also instituted measures for the abolition of this trespass.

Neh. 13:19. He commanded that the gates of Jerusalem should be closed when it began to be dark before the Sabbath, and not re-opened till the Sabbath was over. In the description of this measure the command and its execution are intermixed, or rather the execution is brought forward as the chief matter, and the command inserted therein. “And it came to pass, as soon as the gates of Jerusalem were dark (i.e., when it was dark in the gates) before the Sabbath, I commanded, and the gates were shut; and I commanded that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath,” i.e., after sunset on the Sabbath-day. צָלַל, in the sense of to grow dark, occurs in Hebrew only here, and is an Aramaean expression. Nehemiah also placed some of his servants at the gates, that no burdens, i.e., no wares, victuals, etc., might be brought in on the Sabbath. אֲשֶׁר is wanting before לֹא יָבֹאוּ; the command is directly alluded to, and, with the command, must be supplied before לֹא יָבֹאוּ. The placing of the watch was necessary, because the gates could not be kept strictly closed during the whole of the day, and ingress and egress thus entirely forbidden to the inhabitants.

Neh. 13:20. Then the merchants and sellers of all kinds of ware remained throughout the night outside Jerusalem, once and twice. Thus, because egress from the city could not be refused to the inhabitants, the rest of the Sabbath was

broken outside the gates. Nehemiah therefore put an end to this misdemeanour also.

Neh. 13:21. He warned the merchants to do this no more, threatening them: “If you do (this) again (i.e., pass the night before the walls), I will lay hands on you,” i.e., drive you away by force. The form **לָנִים** for **לָנִים** occurs only here as a “semi- passive” formation; comp. Ewald, § 151, *b*. From that time forth they came no more on the Sabbath.

Neh. 13:22. A further measure taken by Nehemiah for the sanctification of the Sabbath according to the law, is so briefly narrated, that it does not plainly appear in what it consisted. “I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and they should come keep the gates to sanctify the Sabbath-day.” The meaning of the words **בָּאִים שְׁמֵרִים הַשְּׁעָרִים** is doubtful. The Masoretes have separated **בָּאִים** from **שְׁמֵרִים** by Sakeph; while de Wette, Bertheau, and others combine these words: and that they should come to the keepers of the doors. This translation cannot be justified by the usage of the language; for **בָּא** with an accusative of the person occurs only, as may be proved, in prophetic and poetical diction (Job. 20:22; Pro. 10:24; Isa. 41:25; Eze. 32:11), and then in the sense of to come upon some one, to surprise him, and never in the meaning of to come or go to some one. Nor does this unjustifiable translation give even an appropriate sense. Why should the Levites go to the doorkeepers to sanctify the Sabbath? Bertheau thinks it was for the purpose of solemnly announcing to the doorkeepers that the holy day had begun, or to advertise them by some form of consecration of its commencement. This, however, would have been either a useless or unmeaning ceremony. Hence we must relinquish this connection of the words, and either combine **שְׁמֵרִים הַשְּׁעָרִים** as an asyndeton with **בָּאִים**: coming and watching the gates, or: coming as watchers of the gates; and then the measure taken would consist in the appointment of certain Levites to keep the gates on the Sabbath, as well as the ordinary keepers, thus consecrating the Sabbath as a holy day above ordinary days. Nehemiah concludes the account of the abolition of this irregularity, as well as the preceding, by invoking a blessing upon himself; comp. rem. on v. 14. **עַל חוֹסֵה עַל** like Joe. 2:17.

Neh. 13:23-29. MARRIAGES WITH FOREIGN WIVES DISSOLVED. — Vv. 23 and 24. “In those days I also saw, i.e., visited, the Jews who had brought home Ashdodite, Ammonite, and Moabite wives; and half of their children spoke the speech of Ashdod, because they understood not how to speak the Jews’ language, and according to the speech of one and of another people.” It is not said, I saw Jews; but, the Jews who... Hence Bertheau rightly infers, that

Nehemiah at this time found an opportunity of seeing them, perhaps upon a journey through the province. From the circumstance, too, that a portion of the children of these marriages were not able to speak the language of the Jews, but spoke the language of Ashdod, or of this or that nation from which their mothers were descended, we may conclude with tolerable certainty, that these people dwelt neither in Jerusalem nor in the midst of the Jewish community, but on the borders of the nations to which their wives belonged. **הוֹשִׁיב** like **Ezr. 10: 2. וּבְנֵיהֶם** precedes in an absolute sense: and as for their children, one half (of them) spake. **יְהוּדִית** (comp. 2Ki. 18:26, Isa. 36:11, 2Ch. 32:18) is the language of the Jewish community, the vernacular Hebrew. The sentence **וְגַר וְאִיִּם** is an explanatory parenthesis, **וּכְלָשׁוֹן עִם נָעָם** still depending upon **מִדְבַּר**: spake according to the language, i.e., spake the language, of this and that people (of their mothers). The speech of Ashdod is that of the Philistines, which, according to Hitzig (*Urgeschichte u. Mythol. der Philistäer*), belonged to the Indo-Germanic group. The languages, however, of the Moabites and Ammonites were undoubtedly Shemitic, but so dialectically different from the Hebrew, that they might be regarded as foreign tongues.

Neh. 13:25. With these people also Nehemiah contended (**סָרִיב** like vv. 11 and 17), cursed them, smote certain of their men, and plucked off their hair (**מָרַט**, see rem. on **Ezr. 9: 3**), and made them swear by God: Ye shall not give your daughters, etc.; comp. **10:31**. On the recurrence of such marriages after the separations effected by Ezra of those existing at his arrival at Jerusalem, comp. the remark, p. 83. Nehemiah did not insist on the immediate dissolution of these marriages, but caused the men to swear that they would desist from such connections, setting before them, in v. 26, how grievous a sin they were committing. “Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin on account of these?” (**אֵלֶּה עַל**, on account of strange wives). And among many nations there was no king like him (comp. **1Ki. 3:12f.**, **2Ch. 1:12**); and he was beloved of his God (alluding to **2Sa. 12:24**), and God made him king over all Israel (**1Ki. 4: 1**); and even him did foreign women cause to sin (comp. **1Ki. 11: 1-3**). “And of you is it heard to do (that ye do) all this great evil, to transgress against our God, and to marry strange wives?” Bertheau thus rightly understands the sentence: “If the powerful King Solomon was powerless to resist the influence of foreign wives, and if he, the beloved God, found in his relation to God no defence against the sin to which they seduced him, is it not unheard of for you to commit so great an evil?” He also rightly explains **הִנְשַׁמֵּעַ** according to **Deu. 9:32**; while Gesenius in his *Thes.* still takes it, like Rambach, as the first person imperf.: *nobisne morem geramus faciendo*; or: Should we obey you to do so great an evil? (de Wette); which meaning — apart from the consideration that no

obedience, but only toleration of the illegal act, is here in question — greatly weakens, if it does not quite destroy, the contrast between Solomon and לָכֶם.

Neh. 13:28. Nehemiah acted with greater severity towards one of the sons of Joiada the high priest, and son-in-law of Sanballat. He drove him from him (מֵעָלַי, that he might not be a burden to me). The reason for this is not expressly stated, but is involved in the fact that he was son-in-law to Sanballat, i.e., had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (Neh. 2:10), who was so hostile to Nehemiah and to the Jewish community in general, and would not comply with the demand of Nehemiah that he should dismiss this wife. In this case, Nehemiah was obliged to interfere with authority. For this marriage was a pollution of the priesthood, and a breach of the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. Hence he closes the narrative of this occurrence with the wish, v. 29, that God would be mindful of them (לָהֶם, of those who had done such evil) on account of this pollution, etc., i.e., would punish or chastise them for it. נִסְאֵלִי, *stat. constr. pl.* from נִסְאֵל, pollution (*plurale tant.*). It was a pollution of the priesthood to marry a heathen woman, such marriage being opposed to the sacredness of the priestly office, which a priest was to consider even in the choice of a wife, and because of which he might marry neither a whore, nor a feeble nor a divorced woman, while the high priest might marry only a virgin of his own people (Lev. 21: 7, 14). The son of Joiada who had married a daughter of Sanballat was not indeed his presumptive successor (Johanan, 12:11), for then he would have been spoken of by name, but a younger son, and therefore a simple priest; he was, however, so nearly related to the high priest, that by his marriage with a heathen woman the holiness of the high-priestly house was polluted, and therewith also “the covenant of the priesthood,” i.e., not the covenant of the everlasting priesthood which God granted to Phinehas for his zeal (Num. 25:13), but the covenant which God concluded with the tribe of Levi, the priesthood, and the Levites, by choosing the tribe of Levi, and of that tribe Aaron and his descendants, to be His priest (לְכַהֲנוֹ לוֹ, Exo. 28: 1). This covenant required, on the part of the priests, that they should be “holy to the Lord” (Lev. 21: 6, 8), who had chosen them to be ministers of His sanctuary and stewards of His grace.

Josephus (*Ant.* xi. 7. 2) relates the similar fact, that Manasseh, a brother of the high priest Jaddua, married Nikaso, a daughter of the satrap Sanballat, a Cuthite; that when the Jewish authorities on that account excluded him from the priesthood, he established, by the assistant of his father-in-law, the temple and worship on Mount Gerizim (xi. 8. 2-4), and that many priests made common cause with him. Now, though Josephus calls this Manasseh a brother of Jaddua, thus making him a grandson of Joiada, and transposing the establishment of the Samaritan worship on Gerizim to the last years of Darius Codomannus and the

first of Alexander of Macedon, it can scarcely be misunderstood that, notwithstanding these discrepancies, the same occurrence which Nehemiah relates in the present verses is intended by Josephus. The view of older theologians, to which also Petermann (art. Samaria in Herzog's *Realenc.* xiii. p. 366f.) assents, that there were two Sanballats, one in the days of Nehemiah, the other in the time of Alexander the Great, and that both had sons-in-law belonging to the high-priestly family, is very improbable; and the transposition of the fact by Josephus to the times of Darius Codomannus and Alexander accords with the usual and universally acknowledged incorrectness of his chronological combinations. He makes, e.g., Nehemiah arrive at Jerusalem in the twenty-fifth year of Xerxes, instead of the twentieth of Artaxerxes, while Xerxes reigned only twenty years.

Neh. 13:30, 31. Nehemiah concludes his work with a short summary of what he had effected for the community. "I cleansed them from all strangers" (comp. v. 23f., 9: 2, 13: 1f.), "and appointed the services for the priests and Levites, each in his business, and for the wood-offering at times appointed (Neh. 10:35), and for the first-fruits" (Neh. 10:36f.). The suffix to **וְמִתְהַרְתִּים** refers to the Jews. **נִכְר**, strange, means foreign heathen customs, and chiefly marriages with heathen women, v. 23f., 9: 2, 13: 1. **הָעֵמִיד מִשְׁמְרוֹת**, properly to set a watch, here used in the more general sense of to appoint posts of service for the priests and Levites, i.e., to arrange for the attendance upon those offices which they had to perform at their posts in the temple, according to the law; comp. 10:37, 40, 12:44-46, 13:13. **וְלִבְכוּרִים** and **וְלִקְרָבָן**, v. 31, still depend on **מִשְׁמְרוֹת** **וְאֵעֲמִידָה**: I appointed the attendance for the delivery of the wood for the altar at appointed times (comp. 10:35), and for the first-fruits, i.e., for bringing into the sanctuary the heave-offering for the priests. The **בְּכוּרִים** are named as *pars pro toto*, instead of all the **תְּרוּמוֹת** prescribed by the law. On the arrangements connected with these two subjects, viz., the purification from heathen practices, and the restoration of the regular performance of divine worship, was Nehemiah's whole energy concentrated, after the fortification of Jerusalem by a wall of circumvallation had been completed. He thus earned a lasting claim to the gratitude of the congregation of his fellow-countryman that returned from Babylon, and could conclude his narrative with the prayer that God would remember him for good. On this frequently-repeated supplication (comp. vv. 14, 22, and 5:19) Rambach justly remarks: *magnam Nehemiae pietatem spirat*. This piety is, however — as we cannot fail also to perceive — strongly pervaded by the legal spirit of post-Babylonian Judaism.

FOOTNOTES

- ^{ft1} Compare the exact statement of the case in my Lehrbuch, § 149, note 4, which opponents have ignored, because nothing in the way of facts can be brought against it.
- ^{ft2} If Jaddua were on the death of his great-great-grandfather (between 433 and 430 B.C.) about ten years old, he might also live to witness the appearance of Alexander the Great before Jerusalem, 330 B.C. (mentioned by Josephus, Ant. xi. 8. 4), since he would then have attained the age of 110, which does not seem incredible, when it is considered that Jehoiada, the high priest in the reign of Joash, was 130 when he died (2Ch. 24:15).
- ^{ft3} “Nehémie,” remarks Ed. Barde in his Etude critique et exegetique, p. 48, “n’écrit pas sa biographie: son but est l’histoire de la restauration de Jérusalem et du culte, pour montrer l’accomplissement des promesses de Dieu.”
- ^{ft4} Older expositors supposed a *regio a Libano ad Antilibanum protensa et arboribus amoenissimus consita* to be meant. In this view, indeed, they followed Cant. 4:13, but incorrectly. Cler. thought it to be a *tractus terrarum in Judaea, qui Paradisus regius dicebatur*. Josephus speaks (Ant. viii. 7. 3) of fine gardens and ponds at Etham, seven miles south of Jerusalem, where Solomon often made pleasure excursions. Hence Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 169, comp. iii. p. 328) thinks that the פַּרְדֵּס which belonged to the king must have been Solomon’s old royal park at Aetham, which in the time of Nehemiah had become a Persian domain, and that the hill town lying not far to the west of it, and now called by the Arabs Fureidis, i.e., paradisaic, may have received its Hebrew name *Beth-Kerem*, i.e., house of vineyards, from similar pleasure-grounds. Hereupon Bertheau grounds the further conjecture, that “the whole district from Aetham to the hill of Paradise, situate about a league east-south-east of Aetham, may from its nature have been once covered with forest; and no hesitation would be felt in connecting the name of the mountain *Gebel el-Fureidis* or *el-Feridis* (Paradise-hill — hill which rises in a Pardes) with the Pardes in question, if it could be proved that this name was already in existence in prae-Christian times.” All these conjectures rest on very uncertain bases. The *Dshebel Fureidis* is also called the Hill of the Franks. See the description of it in Robinson’s *Palestine*, ii. p. 392f., and Tobler, *Topographie von Jerusalem*, ii. pp. 565-572.
- ^{ft5} This description of the walls of Jerusalem, together with the short statements in Neh. 2:13-15 and 12:27-40, forms the chief authority for the topography

of ancient Jerusalem (before the captivity), and has been frequently discussed and explained. Comp. a summary of recent topographical investigations on this subject by Arnold in Herzog's *Realencycl.* xviii. p. 620f. Among the numerous plans of ancient Jerusalem, the best is: *A plan of the town and environs of Jerusalem, constructed by C. W. M. Van de Velde; with Memoir by Dr. Titus Tobler, 1858, Gotha.*

- ^{ft6} In the neighbourhood of this gate was the pool of Bethesda (John 5: 2), i.e., either the present *Birket Israel* or *Birket es Serain*, south of St. Stephen's gate (Tobler, *Denkblätter*, p. 53f., and *Dritte Wanderung*, p. 221), or the Struthion pool mentioned by Josephus, *bell. Jud.* v. 11. 4, *κολυμβήθρα τοῦ στρουθίου*; Krafft, *Topographie von Jerusalem*, p. 127f.
- ^{ft7} Bertheau's interpretation of this statement, viz., that at the rebuilding and re-fortification of the town after the captivity, the part of the town extending to the broad wall was left, i.e., was not rebuilt, but delayed for the present, answers neither to the verbal sense of the passage nor to the particular mentioned 12:38, that at the dedication of the wall the second company of them that gave thanks went upon the wall from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall, and over from beyond the gate of Ephraim, etc. Haneberg (in Reusch's *theol. Literaturbl.* 1869, No. 12) supports this view, but understands by "the broad wall" the wall which had a broad circuit, i.e., the wall previous to the captivity, and hence infers that the Jerusalem now rebuilt was not equal in extent to the old city. But if a portion of the former city had here been left outside the new wall, the gate of Ephraim would have been displaced, and must have been rebuilt elsewhere in a position to the south of the old gate. Still less can the attempt of the elder Buxtorf (*Lexic. talm. rabb. s. v. עִזָּב*), now revived by Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 174), to force upon the word *עִזָּב* the meaning *restaurare*, or fortify, be justified.
- ^{ft8} Bertheau's view, that these stairs were situated where Mount Zion, upon which stood the city of David, descends abruptly towards the east, and therefore on the precipice running from south to north, which still rises ninety-one feet above the ground northwards of the now so-called Bab el Mogharibeh or dung-gate, opposite the southern part of the west wall of the temple area, is decidedly incorrect. For this place is two thousand feet, i.e., more than one thousand cubits, distant from the pool of Siloah, while our text places them immediately after the length of wall by this pool. The transposition of these "steps" to a position within the present wall of the city is, in Bertheau's case, connected with the erroneous notion that the fountain-gate (v. 15 and 2:14) stood on the site of the present dung-gate (*Bab el Mogharibeh*), for which no other reason appears than the assumption that the southern wall of the city of David, before the captivity,

went over Zion, in the same direction as the southern wall of modern Jerusalem, only perhaps in a rather more southerly direction, — an assumption shown to be erroneous, even by the circumstance that in this case the sepulchres of David, Solomon, and the kings of Judah would have stood outside the city wall, on the southern part of Zion; while, according to the Scripture narrative, David, Solomon, and the kings of Judah were buried *in* the city of David (1Ki. 2:10, 11:42, 14:31, 15: 8, and elsewhere). But apart from this consideration, this hypothesis is shattered by the statements of this fifteenth verse, which Bertheau cannot explain so inconsistently with the other statements concerning the building of the wall, as to make them say that any one coming from the west and going round by the south of the city towards the east, would first arrive at the fountain-gate, and then at the portion of wall in question; but is obliged to explain, so that the chief work, the building of the fountain-gate, is mentioned first; then the slighter work, the reparation of a length of wall *as supplementary*; and this makes the localities enumerated in v. 13 succeed each other in the following order, in a direction from the west by south and east towards the north: “Valley-gate — one thousand cubits of wall as far as the dung-gate; dung-gate — the wall of the conduit towards the king’s garden, as far as the stairs which lead from the city of David — fountain-gate.” No adequate reason for this transposition of the text is afforded by the circumstance that no portion of wall is mentioned (vv. 14 and 15) as being repaired between the dung-gate and the valley-gate. For how do we know that this portion on the southern side of Zion was broken down and needing repair? Might not the length between these two gates have been left standing when the city was burnt by the Chaldeans?

^{ft9} Equally devoid of proof is the view of Ewald, Diestel (in Herzog’s *Realencycl.* xiii. p. 325), Arnold, and others, that the royal palace stood upon Moriah or Ophel on the south side of the temple, in support of which Diestel adduces Neh. 3:25. See the refutation of this view in the commentary on 1Ki. 7:12 (note).

^{ft10} Bertheau considers the text corrupt, regarding the word **מִתְחַתִּיּוֹת** as the object of **אֶעֱמִיד**, and alters it into **מִחֲשָׁבוֹת** or **חֲשָׁבוֹנוֹת**, engines for hurling missiles (2Ch. 26:15), or into **מִמְחִיּוֹת** (a word of this own invention), instruments for hurling. But not only is this conjecture critically inadmissible, it also offers no appropriate sense. The LXX reads the text as we do, and merely renders **בְּצַחַחִיִּים** conjecturally by **ἐν τοῖς ἀκαπεινῶσις**. Besides, it is not easy to see how **חֲשָׁבוֹת** could have arisen from a false reading of **מִתְחַתִּיּוֹת**; and it should be remembered that **מִחֲשָׁבוֹת** does not mean a machine for hurling, while **מִמְחִיּוֹת** is a mere fabrication. To this

must be added, that such machines are indeed placed *upon* the walls of a fortress to hurl down stones and projectiles upon assaulting foes, and not *behind* the walls, where they could only be used to demolish the walls, and so facilitate the taking of the town by the enemy.

^{ft11} Ewald, *Gesch.* iv. p. 178, thinks that traces of the correct reading of this verse are found in the statement of Josephus, *Ant.* xi. 5. 7f., that the wall of Jerusalem was finished in two years and four months, and that the word **וּשְׁנָתַיִם** may have been omitted from Neh. 6:15 by an ancient clerical error, though he is obliged to admit that Josephus in other instances gives no trustworthy dates concerning Nehemiah, whom he makes arrive at Jerusalem in the twenty-fifth, and complete the wall in the twenty-eight year of Xerxes. On the other hand, Bertheau has already remarked, that even if **וּשְׁנָתַיִם** is supplied, no agreement with the statement of Josephus is obtained, since the question still remains how four months can be made out of fifty-two days, or *vice versa*, fifty-two days of four months. In fact, it is vain to seek for any common ground on which these two different statements can be harmonized; and hence the two years and four months of Josephus can scarcely be regarded as furnishing traces of another reading of the text.

^{ft12} Josephus (*bello Jud.* ii. 17. 6) speaks of a **τῶν ξυλοφορίων ἑορτή**, which he places on the fourteenth day of the month **Ἀβ**, i.e., Ab, the fifth month of the Jewish year. From this Bertheau infers that the plural **עֵתוֹת מְזֻמְנִים**, here and 13:31, denotes the one season or day of delivery in each year. But though the name of this festival is derived from the present verse, the LXX translating **עַל קָרְבֵּן הָעֵצִים**, *περὶ κλήρον ξυλοφορίας*, it appears even from what Josephus says of this feast, **ἐν ἧ πᾶσιν ἔθος ὕλην τῷ βωμῷ προσφέρειν**, that the feast of wood-carrying does not designate that one day of the year on which the wood was delivered for the service of the altar. According to Mishna Taanit, Neh. 4 (in Lightfoot's *horae hebraicae in Matth.* i. 1), nine days in the year were appointed for the delivery of wood, viz., 1st Nisan, 20th Tammuz, 5th, 7th, and 10th Ab, etc. Further particulars are given in Lundius, *jüd. Heiligtümer*, p. 1067f. The feast of wood-carrying may be compared with our harvest festival; and Bertheau's inference is not more conclusive than would be the inference that our harvest festival denotes the one day in the year on which the harvest is gathered in.

^{ft13} In Hieros. Taanith, f. 68a; Tosafta Taanith, c. 11, in Babyl. Erachin, f. 12b. The last statement is, according to Herzfeld, *Gesch.* i. p. 393, as follows: "Four divisions of priests returned from captivity, viz., Jedaiah, Charim, Paschur, and Immer. These the prophets of the returned captives again

divided into twenty-four; whereupon their names were written upon tickets and put in an urn, from which Jedaiah drew five, and each of the other three before-named divisions as many: it was then ordained by those prophets, that even if the division Joiarib (probably the first division before the captivity) should return, Jedaiah should nevertheless retain his position, and Joiarib should be **טפל לו** (associated with him, belonging to him).” Comp. Bertheau on Neh. p. 230, and Oehler in Herzog’s *Realencycl.* xii. p. 185, who, though refusing this tradition the value of independent historical testimony, still give it more weight than it deserves.]