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ARTICLE II.

A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK
OF ZECHARIAH.

BY WALTER R. BETTERIDGE.

THE unity of the book of Zechariah was first questioned, about the middle of the seventeenth century, by the English scholar Joseph Mede (d. 1638). From that date to this, these prophecies have been one of the most interesting subjects of criticism; and the history of these investigations forms one of the most instructive chapters in the history of biblical criticism.

The quotation of Zech. xi. 13 by Matthew (xxvii. 9, 10) as from Jeremiah seems to have called Mede's attention to the authorship of the last six chapters of the book of Zechariah. The doubt as to the unity of the book raised by this quotation was strengthened, rather than removed, by an examination of the character of the chapters in question. He says: "Certainly, if a man weighs the contents of some of them [chaps. ix.-xiv.], they should in likehood be of an elder date than the time of Zachary; namely, before the Captivity: for the subjects of some of them were scarce in being after that time. . . . There is no scripture saith they are Zachary's; but there is scripture saith they are Jeremy's, as this of the Evangelist."¹ Mede's opinions found some recognition in England, for they were advocated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Hammond, Kidder, and Whiston. Their arguments were essentially the same as Mede's, and all of them supported

¹ Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Art. "Zechariah."

their conclusions chiefly upon Matthew's statement. These authors were opposed by Carpzov,¹ who devoted himself to defending the unity of the book, noticing especially the arguments of Whiston. The quotation in Matthew he disposed of by asserting that Matthew simply quoted from the order of the prophets, which order he designated by the name of the first prophet in the list, a position which, according to the oldest Jewish authorities, was occupied by Jeremiah. The reference was thus parallel to the citation of the order of the Hagiographa as the Psalms (Luke xxiv. 44).

But Mede, Hammond, Kidder, Whiston, and Carpzov were only the heralds of the coming conflict. With the appearance of an anonymous work on Zechariah in Germany in 1784 from the pen of Flügge, archdeacon of Hamburg, and the book of Bishop Newcome in England in 1785, the real critical battle began,—a battle which has been waged unceasingly, and with varying fortunes, from that day to this. Both Newcome and Flügge advocated the preëxilic authorship of Zech. ix.—xiv.; and Newcome was the first to divide the six chapters between two preëxilic authors. "I conclude," he says, "from internal marks in chapters ix., x., xi., that these three chapters were written much earlier than the time of Jeremiah, and before the captivity of the tribes. They seem to suit Hosea's age and manner. The twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters form a distinct prophecy, and were written after the death of Josiah; but, whether before or after the captivity, and by what prophets, is uncertain, though I incline to think that the author lived before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians."²

With certain modifications this opinion of Newcome became the prevailing critical view for almost a century.

¹ *Critica Sacra* (2d ed., 1748), p. 856.

² *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 3603.

Although there was a great diversity in details as to the exact date of the two writers, there was still a general agreement that chapters ix.-xi. were written by a prophet belonging either to the Northern Kingdom or to the Southern Kingdom, but active, like Amos, chiefly in the Northern Kingdom, and a contemporary of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. Chapters xii.-xiv., on the other hand, were written after the death of Josiah, but before the Exile. Rosenmüller and Hitzig were almost the only scholars among the advocates of the preëxilic authorship who did not adopt this theory. Rosenmüller, who at first defended the unity of the entire book, in the first edition of his "Scholia in Vetus Testamentum,"¹ in the second edition² yielded this position, and advocated the preëxilic authorship of chapters ix.-xiv., though he maintained that these six chapters were a unity, and came from a prophet who lived in the time of Uzziah. This was also the view of Hitzig in an article published in *Studien und Kritiken*.³ In his commentary,⁴ while he still defended the unity of authorship of the chapters in question, he had yet so modified his original opinion as to acknowledge that chapters ix.-xi. belong to a period about fourteen years earlier than xii.-xiv. In the later editions of his commentary, however, he gave up the unity of authorship of these six chapters, and assigned ix.-xi. to the period of anarchy in the Northern Kingdom following upon the death of Jeroboam, while he assigned xii.-xiv. to the time of Manasseh.⁵

With this exception, the theory of the preëxilic authorship of these chapters in the form already outlined was regarded, by a large number of the most eminent Old Testament scholars of the century, as proved. The list of their names is a long one, and I can mention here only some of

¹ 1816, vii. 4, pp. 233-236. ² 1828. ³ 1830, pp. 25-45.

⁴ Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten (1838), pp. 129-132.

⁵ 3d ed., 1863, pp. 351-391.

the most prominent. To this list belong the names of Bertholdt,¹ who was the first to suggest that the author of chapters ix.-xi. was Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, who is mentioned in Isa. viii. 2; Gesenius,² Knobel,³ and Ewald.⁴ To Ewald is due the suggestion which has found much favor with more recent critics, that verses 7-9 of chapter xiii. have been removed from their original connection, and that they should be placed at the close of chapter xi. Other supporters of this view are Bleek,⁵ Nöldeke,⁶ Diestel,⁷ Bunsen,⁸ Schrader,⁹ Duhm,¹⁰ Orelli,¹¹ Steiner,¹² Riehm,¹³ Schultz,¹⁴ and Farrar.¹⁵ In the most recent times, Strack¹⁶ has supported this theory, and König¹⁷ has defended it at considerable length and with great vigor.

Although this division of chapters ix.-xiv. among two preëxilic authors¹⁸ was regarded as one of the most certain as well as one of the most brilliant results of scientific criticism, so that Hitzig¹⁹ declared that a refusal to accept the

¹ Historisch-kritisch Einleitung, 1812, and ff. 4ter Theil, pp. 1712-1728.

² Commentar über den Jesaja, 1821, p. 327.

³ Prophetismüs der Hebräer, 1837, 2ter Theil, pp. 166-176, 280-290.

⁴ Propheten des Alten Bundes (1840), Vol. i. pp. 308-324, 389-398.

⁵ Studien und Kritiken, 1852, pp. 247-332; Introduction to the Old Testament (Eng. Trans. 1869), Vol. ii. pp. 161-175.

⁶ Die Alttestamentliche Literatur (1868), p. 214.

⁷ Art. "Sacharja" in Schenkel's Bibel Lexikon, Vol. v. pp. 126-134.

⁸ Bibelurkunden, 2te Abtheilung, 2ter Theil, pp. 272-274, 370-371.

⁹ De Wette-Schrader Lehrbuch der hist.-krit. Einleitung (8th ed. 1869), pp. 477-483.

¹⁰ Theologie der Propheten, 1875, pp. 141-149; 222, 225-228.

¹¹ Old Testament Prophecy, E. T., 1885, pp. 244-253, 345-360; The Twelve Minor Prophets, E. T., 1893, pp. 304-311.

¹² Hitzig-Steiner, Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten, 4th ed., 1881, pp. 367-

374.

¹³ Einleitung in das Alte Testament (1890), Vol. ii. pp. 150-160.

¹⁴ Old Testament Theology, E. T., 1892, pp. 416-418.

¹⁵ Minor Prophets, pp. 208-222.

¹⁶ Einleitung in das Alte Testament, 4th ed., 1895, pp. 109-111.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1893, pp. 364-376.

¹⁸ Cf. Bunsen, *ut supra*, p. 272.

¹⁹ Die Kleinen Propheten, 1838, p. 129.

conclusion was equivalent to a denial of the rights of criticism, yet there was no lack of competent defenders of the unity of the entire book of Zechariah. So Eichhorn¹ and Jahn.² Jahn's discussion is notable from the fact that, instead of maintaining, as has usually been done by the advocates of the unity of the entire book, that chapters i.-viii. contain the record of Zechariah's prophetic activity immediately after his call to be a prophet, while chapters ix.-xiv. embody the messages of his later years, he suggested that Zechariah first composed and published chapters ix.-xiv., but that these oracles were not received by his contemporaries, because, dealing as they did with the remote future, they were unintelligible to them. Later, in order to find an audience among his fellow-men, he proclaimed the prophecies contained in chapters i.-viii., prophecies dealing with the immediate future. Rosenmüller followed Jahn, and maintained the unity of the book. His adoption of the preëxilic theory in the second edition of his "Scholia" has already been noticed. De Wette's change of attitude in regard to this question is also noteworthy. In the first three editions of his "Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung" he had adopted the preëxilic theory of the authorship of these chapters. In the fourth to seventh editions, however, he abandoned this position, and came out for the unity of the entire book.³ Among other advocates of the unity of the entire book should be mentioned Hengstenberg,⁴ Hävernick,⁵ Stähelin,⁶

¹ *Hinleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1st ed., 1780-1783, 3ter Theil, pp. 414-426.

² *Einleitung in die göttlichen Bücher des Alten Bundes*, 1803, Vol. ii. pp. 675-685.

³ E.g., 6th ed., 1845, pp. 372-376.

⁴ *Dissertation on the Genuineness of Daniel and the Integrity of Zechariah*, E. T., 1847, pp. 293-315.

⁵ *Handbuch der hist.-krit. Einleitung in das A. T.*, 1837, Vol. ii. pp. 411-426.

⁶ *Messianische Weissagungen*, 1847, pp. 125-135, 173-175.

Keil,¹ Pusey,² Henderson,³ Köhler,⁴ Ayre,⁵ Harman,⁶ Chambers,⁷ C. H. H. Wright,⁸ Lowe,⁹ T. T. Perowne,¹⁰ and Dods.¹¹ Bishop Perowne¹² evidently favors the unity of authorship, but he concludes that "it is not easy to say which way the weight of evidence preponderates" (p. 3608). Drake in the Bible Commentary is equally undecided.

Side by side with these two theories, a third theory has from the first had its supporters; viz. that chapters ix.-xiv. are from a different author than chapters i.-viii., and belong either to the late Persian or to the Greek-Maccabean period. Eichhorn, who in the first edition of his "*Einleitung*" had defended the unity of authorship, preserved in the second and third editions,¹³ in the body of the text, the discussion of the first edition; while he suggested, in quite an elaborate note, that many points in chapters ix.-xiv. could be best explained after the time of Alexander the Great, a view which he finally adopted positively in the fourth edition.¹⁴ Paulus¹⁵ argued for a date as late as

¹ Introduction to the Old Testament, E. T., 1871, pp. 425-430, and Commentary on the Minor Prophets, E. T., 1868, Vol. ii. pp. 217-233.

² Minor Prophets, 1866, pp. 503-512.

³ *Ibid.*, 1868, pp. 354-357.

⁴ Die Weissagungen Sacharjas, 1861, 1863, and article "Sacharja" in P. R. E., 2d ed., Vol. xiii. pp. 179-187.

⁵ Horne's Introduction to the Holy Scriptures, 14th ed., 1877, pp. 882-885.

⁶ Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures, 1879, pp. 407-411.

⁷ Schaff-Lange Commentary, Minor Prophets, p. 874, and article "Zechariah" in Schaff-Herzog, Vol. iii. p. 2568.

⁸ Zechariah and his Prophecies, Bampton Lectures for 1878, especially pp. xxii-lxii, and Introduction to the Old Testament, 1891, pp. 222-224.

⁹ Commentary on Zechariah, 1882, pp. ix-xx, and in Ellicott's Old Testament Commentary, for English Readers, Vol. v.

¹⁰ Haggai and Zechariah in The Cambridge Bible, 1888.

¹¹ The Post-Exilian Prophets, in Handbooks for Bible Classes.

¹² Article "Zechariah" in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Am. ed., Vol. iv. pp. 3598-3610. ¹³ 1787 and 1803.

¹⁴ 1824. ¹⁵ Exeg. Handbuch über die drei ersten Evangelien (1832, iii. 1, pp. 117-142).

John Hyrcanus. Vatke¹ maintained that these chapters could not have been written earlier than the first half or middle of the fifth century. Geiger² asserted that these chapters ix.-xiv. were the work of a later poet; and Böttcher³ assigned Zech. ix.-xiv. to a date after 330 B.C. Wellhausen⁴ regarded the last six chapters as the work of an anonymous contemporary of Zechariah. But even with such advocates, this theory attracted but little notice, and indeed, in many discussions of the critical questions regarding the book of Zechariah, was not even mentioned, so thoroughly convinced were the majority of critics that the question at issue was simply whether the last six chapters were preëxilic or from the hand of Zechariah himself.

The year 1881, however, marks an epoch in the history of the criticism of our prophecy. In this and the following years, Stade published his elaborate article on Deutero-Zacharja,⁵ in which he sought to prove, by a consideration of the relation of the contents of chapters ix.-xiv. to the rest of Old Testament prophecy, and of the indications as to date to be drawn both from the internal history of Judaism and from external history, that the chapters in question could not have been written earlier than the first ten or fifteen years of the third century B.C., i.e. 300-278. Stade also held that the entire section came from the hand of one man. With considerable difference of opinion as to date and other details, particularly in regard to the question of the unity of authorship of the last six chapters, these chapters have been assigned to a date subsequent to Zechariah by most of the leading critics of the past fifteen years.

¹ Die Religion des A. T., 1835, pp. 553-554.

² Urschrift und Übersetzungen, 1857, pp. 58-59.

³ Lehrgebäude der Hebräischen Sprache, 1866, 1868, Vol. i. p. 23.

⁴ Geschichte Israels, 1878, Vol. i. p. 420; Prolegomena, E. T., 1885, p. 404.

⁵ Zeitschrift für die A. T. Wissenschaft, Vol. i. pp. 1-96; ii. pp. 151
172, 275-309.

So Wellhausen,¹ Cheyne,² Cornill,³ Delitzsch,⁴ Kirkpatrick,⁵ Eckhardt,⁶ Marti,⁷ Wildeboer,⁸ Kantsch,⁹ and with some hesitation Elmslie.¹⁰ Worthy of special mention are the views of Kuenen, Driver, Briggs, and Halévy. Kuenen, who in the first edition of his "Onderzoek" had been an advocate of the preexilic theory, has in the second edition adopted a modified form of the post-exilic theory.¹¹ He acknowledges that chapters ix.-xiv. as we now have them are later than Zechariah, but still the author has made use of preexilic material, particularly in chapters ix.-xi. In this way he accounts for the supposed preexilic references in these chapters. Driver's view¹² is essentially that of Kuenen. Briggs¹³ divides these chapters between two authors,—one, the author of ix.-xi., belonging to the time of Hezekiah; while the author of xii.-xiv. belongs to an age later than Zechariah. Halévy¹⁴ combats the opinions of Wellhausen and Stade and asserts that the chapters in question belong to the early Persian period. He does not express himself positively on the question of authorship, but he seeks to assume the non-Zecharian authorship.

Just as half a century ago the preexilic theory was dominant, so now it is undoubtedly true that the theory of a date later than Zechariah is in possession of the field. This

¹ Article "Zechariah" in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, Heft V., 1892.

² *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. i. pp. 76-83.

³ *Einleitung in das A. T.*, 1892, pp. 195-201.

⁴ *Messianische Weissagungen*, 1890, pp. 149 ff.

⁵ *Doctrine of the Prophets*, 1892.

⁶ Z. A. T. W., Vol. xiii. pp. 76-109.

⁷ *Kayser-Marti Theologie des A. T.*, p. 191.

⁸ *De Letterkunde des Ouden Verbonds*, 1893, pp. 408-416.

⁹ *Die Heilige Schrift des A. T. übersetzt.*, 1894, *Beilagen*, pp. 203 ff.

¹⁰ *Book by Book*, 1892, pp. 331-337.

¹¹ Cf. *Onderzoek*, 2d ed., Vol. ii. pp. 408-425.

¹² *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 1891, pp. 324-333.

¹³ *Messianic Prophecy*, 1886, pp. 183-184, 462 ff.

¹⁴ *Revue Sémitique*, Avril, 1844, pp. 101-109.

bewildering change in critical opinion might well lead one to expect that the next movement would be a return to the traditional view of the unity of the entire book. In fact the appearance, in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*¹ of an able article from the pen of George Livingstone Robinson, Ph. D., entitled, "The Prophecies of Zechariah, with special Reference to the Origin and Date of Chapters ix.-xiv.," is not unlikely to mark the beginning of the new critical movement. The article is, as we are informed by a footnote, a Dissertation presented to the Philosophical Faculty of Leipzig, for the purpose of obtaining the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Dr. Robinson, who is now a professor in Knox College, Toronto, has made a valuable addition to the literature on the prophecy of Zechariah, and in the main his conclusions seem to the present writer perfectly satisfactory. After a very complete bibliography, the author gives a brief sketch of the history of critical opinion, followed by an analysis of the contents of the book. He then proceeds to examine the pre-exilic hypothesis, discussing successively: (1) the Argument from Historical Allusion; (2) the Argument from Messianic Prophecy; and (3) the Argument from Parallelism in Thought and Language between Zech. ix.-xiv. and the other prophets. Each one of these arguments is subjected to a searching analysis, and it is difficult to understand how an unprejudiced mind can follow this process and not conclude, with Professor Robinson, that "there are good critical grounds for assigning these disputed prophecies to a post-exilic date."

Having thus disposed of the pre-exilic theories, the author proceeds to examine the post-Zecharian hypothesis. He insists rightly upon making a sharp distinction between the grounds advanced in favor of a post-exilic date and those which argue a post-Zecharian date. He considers two

¹ Vol. xii. pp. 1-92.

arguments,—the linguistic and the historical. In his discussion of the linguistic argument he investigates particularly that of Eckhardt, who went over this ground in the *Zeitschrift für die A. T. Wissenschaft*, and concluded, on the basis of the linguistic argument alone, that these chapters could have been written “only in Grecian times.” This conclusion Professor Robinson, after a thorough examination of the various linguistic criteria of late authorship, declines to accept, and asserts that the linguistic evidences lead rather to a date before the Greek period. Nor do the passages which have been said to furnish historical arguments in favor of the Greek-Maccabean period stand the test of criticism. On the contrary, some of them, such as Zech. xiv. 9; xii. 2, are utterly inconclusive, while others really favor the Persian period. One of these is the mention of the houses of David and Levi; that is, of the political and ecclesiastical authorities in xii. 12–14. So far as we know, such a coördination was natural only in the early Persian period, for even as early as the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the house of David seems to have lost the prestige which it unquestionably had in the time of Zerubbabel. The other is the mention of the sons of Greece in chapter ix. 13. This reference is the strongest argument in favor of the post-Zecharian date. Stade indeed goes so far as to assert,¹ that the mention of the sons of Greece alone is an imperative reason for the placing of these chapters in the Greek period. But Robinson maintains, and as we think rightly, that the nature of the reference to the Greeks is too vague and indefinite, in short too apocalyptic in its character, to necessitate a date after Alexander. All that it requires is that the Greeks should have already appeared as a formidable power on the plane of history, and it is a well-known fact that the Ionians had been threatening the Persian empire several years before the battle of Marathon.

¹ *Zeitschrift für die A. T. Wissenschaft*, Vol. ii. p. 290.

Our author concludes that this reference to the Greeks leads to a date before 516 B.C., a conclusion which he seeks to support by other arguments. He maintains that these chapters indicate that the temple is still in process of construction. But here we must part company with him, for his arguments appear to us entirely inconclusive. We are too little acquainted with the period from the completion of the temple in 516 to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, to be able to draw definite conclusions from the allusions in these chapters. But that they must have been written before the time of Malachi seems certain. Professor Robinson examines next the arguments against the integrity of these chapters, and concludes that they are from one hand; and, lastly, he decides that they were probably composed by Zechariah himself.

As a whole, this dissertation of Professor Robinson's meets with our most hearty approval. In the main we agree with his conclusions, although, as we have indicated above, we do not think the historical references will justify us in fixing upon so definite a date, i.e., between 518 and 516, for the origin of these prophecies.

The author has undoubtedly made a mistake when he names Cornill among those who argue that ix. 13 is either a post-exilic interpolation or a corrupt text. Cornill has, on the contrary, argued most positively against Kuenen's position, and in favor of that of Stade. He also errs in saying that Hitzig in the first edition of his Commentary (1838) gave up the unity of chapters ix.-xiv. Hitzig's successive changes of view have already been described. We would suggest, also, that the author add to the list of the defenders of the pre-exilic hypothesis the name of König.¹ König's attempt to explain the בְּנֵי נָוִי of ix. 13 as a textual corruption, which arose before the employment of final letters, so that בְּנֵי נָוִי might be equal to בְּנֵי נָוִי, i.e.

"the sons of Nineveh," is interesting and might well be mentioned in such an historical survey as Professor Robinson has given.

But, at the most, these are only trifles, and do not seriously affect the merit of the article. We are glad to acknowledge that a careful study of it in connection with the history of the criticism of the book of Zechariah, has strengthened our conviction that there is no really decisive argument against the unity of the entire book.