

meant, says Naegelsbach, the 28th year of Hezekiah, i.e., the 14th year after his sickness--we need not follow Naegelsbach in his construction to think that it was at least in order to furnish an adequate introduction to the rest of the book that ch.39 was put there. Commentators such as Delitzsch<sup>1</sup> and Naegelsbach<sup>2</sup> have with some unanimity held to the view that Hezekiah sinned grievously in showing to the ambassadors of Merodach-Baladan his house of precious things and silver and gold. The thought is that he was preparing the way at least for an unholy alliance with the Babylonian power. It may not be important whether we hold this view or not. Philip Schaff, Dr. Naegelsbach's translator, adds a note in which he argues ~~that~~ strenuously that Hezekiah cannot be proved to have been a sinner in this display of his treasures. It may be so; at least it seems to us that the incident finds a greater significance not in the fact that Hezekiah sinned, which is at least not said in the plain Scriptural presentation, but rather in the fact that it does prepare the way for the following prophecies of the Babylonian captivity which occur in the first part of the second section, chs.40-46. Certainly these verses are essential to the understanding of the Second Section, both because they furnish an introduction, more or less adequate, to chs 40-46, and also because the fulfillment of the prophecy is said to be postponed at least until after the days of Hezekiah. At what exact date Israel should be carried to ~~Babylon~~ is not specified. Hezekiah's sons mentioned here need not include his own Manasseh, but of course may be any of his descendants. Indeed, Manasseh was not yet born. For Hezekiah lived after this incident approximately fifteen years, and Manasseh, his immediate successor, acceded at the age of twelve, (II K. 21:1). We might indeed suppose that so grand a

1. Commentary, in loc.

2. Lange, Commentary, in loc.