

**EZRA AND
NEHEMIAH: THEIR
LIVES AND TIMES**

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Ezra and Nehemiah: Their Lives and Times by George Rawlinson

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BY

GEORGE RAWLINSON, M.A., F.R.G.S.,

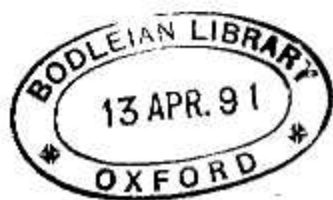
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PREFACE.

THE lives of Ezra and Nehemiah are known to us, almost wholly, from the Books that bear their names. A few notices in Josephus, a few Rabbinical traditions, are all that can be added to the accounts given in Holy Scripture. Their times, however, receive considerable illustration from recent researches into the ancient history of Persia. Such copiously illustrated works as Ker Porter's "Travels," Rich's "Babylon and Persepolis," Baron Texier's "Description de l'Arménie, de la Perse, et de la Mésopotamie," and the "Voyage en Perse" of MM. Flandin and Coste, throw a flood of light on the character of the Persian Court, the magnificence of the Royal palaces, and the manners and customs of the governing classes under the early Persian kings. Loftus's "Chaldæa and Susiana" contains a special monograph on the great Persian capital, Susa, which accurately describes its situation, and its probable appearance in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra. The notices in classical authors, as Herodotus, Ctesias, Xenophon, Arrian, Athenæus, add occasional touches, and help towards a reproduction of the scenes in which were passed the early lives of the two great Reformers. Josephus adds very little to the information contained in Scripture, and the Rabbinical traditions are neither copious, nor wholly trustworthy. In this deficiency of ancient authorities, modern writers demand an unusual share of our attention. The articles on "Ezra" and "Nehemiah" in Winer's "Realwörterbuch," in Kitto's "Cyclopædia," and in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," are of great weight and importance. But, probably, the best accounts that have hitherto been given of the times and characters of the two Reformers are those contained in the general "Histories of Israel" put

forth within the last twenty or thirty years by some of the ripest scholars and the most eminent writers of our day. Ewald in his "Geschichte des Volkes Israel," and Dean Stanley in his "Lectures on the Jewish Church," have made most careful studies of the period, and it is to them that the present writer must acknowledge his special obligations. The work of Professor Kuenen on the "Religion of Israel" has also been of considerable service to him, though its value is much impaired by the confident adoption of quite unproved and most improbable hypotheses with respect to the late origin of the Mosaic Law, and the promulgation of much of it by Ezra and Nehemiah "for the first time." On the subject of the chronology of the period, the author has found himself unable to adopt the view advocated with so much ingenuity by the late Mr. Bosanquet in his "Times of Ezra and Nehemiah," or even that suggested in the "Dictionary of the Bible" by Bishop Arthur Hervey. The old chronology of Prideaux has seemed to him the most reasonable, and it has confirmed his judgment on the point to find the same view taken both by Ewald and Stanley.

LONDON,

November 21, 1890.

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