

**AN INTRODUCTION TO  
THE BOOKS OF EZRA,  
NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649030262

An Introduction to the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther by A. H. Sayce

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**A. H. SAYCE**

**AN INTRODUCTION TO  
THE BOOKS OF EZRA,  
NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER**



AN INTRODUCTION  
TO THE BOOKS OF  
EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER.

BY

A. H. SAYCE, M.A.,

*Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford; Hon. LL.D., Dublin.*

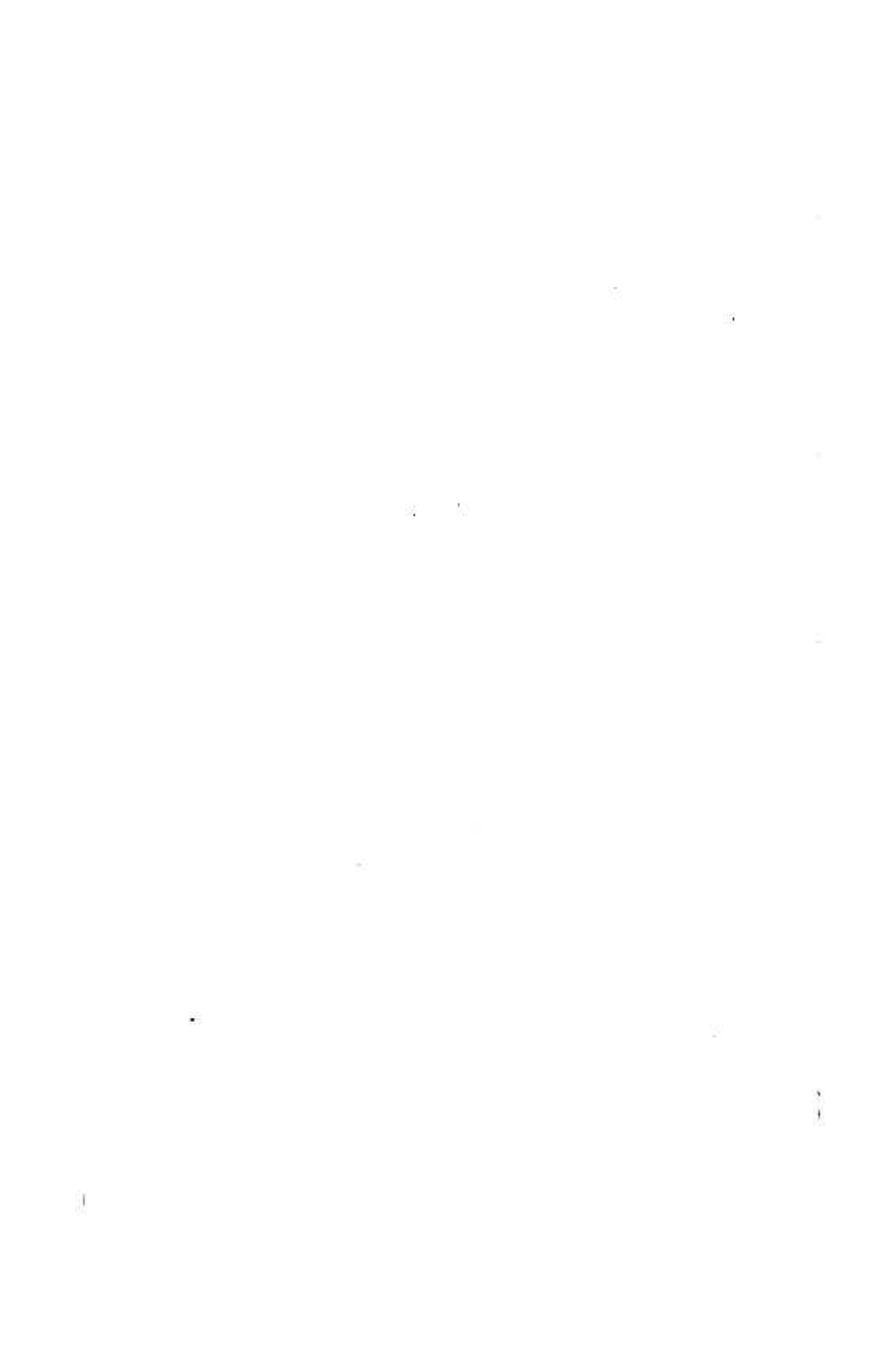
AUTHOR OF 'FRESH LIGHT FROM THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS,' 'ASSYRIA: ITS PRINCES  
PRIESTS AND PEOPLE,' 'THE HITTITES; OR, THE STORY OF A  
FORGOTTEN EMPIRE,' ETC., ETC.

*Third Edition.*

LONDON:  
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,

36, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,  
AND 164, PICCADILLY.

1889.



BS1355  
539  
1889

## P R E F A C E .

---

THE following pages will explain themselves. Their object is to set before the reader a brief but intelligible account of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, and a history of the times to which they belong. An endeavour has been made to omit nothing that calls for comment or explanation, and thus to present the Biblical student with a work that, while serving the purposes of a commentary, forms a continuous narrative, and is of manageable size. Its distinguishing peculiarity is the use made in it of recent monumental discoveries, more especially of the inscriptions of Cyrus; and the scholar will notice one or two illustrations of Holy Writ that are here given for the first time.

Those who wish for more detailed information regarding the newly-found records of the past, and the testimony they bear to the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures, may refer to the volumes entitled 'Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments,' 'Assyria: its Princes, Priests and People,' and 'The Hittites; or, the Story of a Forgotten Empire,' published by the Religious Tract Society.

**M313874**



25

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34



## CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE RETURN FROM THE CAPTIVITY . . . . .	7
II. THE BOOKS OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH . . . . .	30
III. THE AGE AND WORK OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH . . . . .	46
IV. THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM . . . . .	86
V. THE BOOK OF ESTHER . . . . .	100
APPENDIX I.—TRANSLATION OF THE GREAT INSCRIPTION OF DARIUS, THE SON OF HYSTASPES, ON THE ROCK OF BEHISTUN . . . . .	
	121
APPENDIX II.—INSCRIPTION OF XERXES AT PERSEPOLIS . . . . .	
	137
APPENDIX III.—MONTHS OF THE JEWISH YEAR AFTER THE EXILE . . . . .	
	138
INDEX . . . . .	139
INDEX OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES . . . . .	143

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

B.C.

- 588. Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.
- 555. Accession of Nabonidos.
- 549. Conquest of Astyages and Ekbatana by Cyrus.
- 538. Overthrow and death of Nabonidos ; Cyrus occupies Babylon.
- 537. Return of the Jews from exile.
- 532. Kambyzes made king of Babylon by his father.
- 529. Death of Cyrus and accession of Kambyzes.
- 527. Conquest of Egypt by Kambyzes.
- 521. Gomates the Magian, the false Bardes (pseudo-Smerdis), king for seven months.
- 521. Election of Darius the son of Hystaspes to the throne of Persia.
- 520. Rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem recommenced.
- 520-19. Revolt of Babylon under Nidinta-Bel.
- 515. Completion of the Temple at Jerusalem.
- 514. Second revolt of Babylon under Arakha.
- 485. Death of Darius and accession of his son Xerxes I.
- 480. Battle of Salamis.
- 479. Battle of Platea.
- 465. Murder of Xerxes, and accession of his son Artaxerxes I. Longimanus.
- 458. Departure of Ezra from Babylon.
- 445. Nehemiah appointed governor of Judæa ; the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt.
- 433. Re-appointment of Nehemiah as governor.
- 425. Death of Artaxerxes ; his son Xerxes II. succeeds for two months.
- 425. Sogdianos, his half-brother, king for seven months.
- 424. Darius II. Nothos his brother.
- 395. Artaxerxes II.<sup>1</sup> Mnemon his son.
- 359. Artaxerxes III. Ochos his son.
- 339. Arses his son.
- 336. Darius III. Codomannus.
- 331. Persia conquered by Alexander the Great.

<sup>1</sup> So according to the cuneiform tablets. According to the Greek writers, Darius II. reigned nineteen years, and Artaxerxes II. forty-six (or forty-three) years.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE RETURN FROM THE CAPTIVITY.

THE prophets had predicted that the Jews should remain captive in Babylonia for seventy years. Nebuchadnezzar had followed the policy of the Assyrian kings in transporting conquered peoples, or at all events the upper classes among them, from their native homes. Thus the Israelitish inhabitants of Samaria had been carried to the banks of the Khabur and to the cities of Media, while their places were supplied by captives from Babylonia and Susiania. It was supposed that a conquered nation was in this way rendered harmless, and deprived of the opportunity to revolt. Torn from its old homes, and transplanted among an alien population, it had neither the motives nor the means to rebel.

This policy succeeded wherever the captive race had the inclination and the time to become absorbed into the people among whom it was settled. But when the captives refused to amalgamate with the stranger, and preserved a bitter memory of their conquest and enslaved condition, the policy was a most dangerous one. It was inevitable that the exiles would be continually on the look-out for deliverance and restoration, and might intrigue successfully at a critical moment with a foreign invader.