

freedom ; and what is most dangerous of all, his history is not written for its own sake, but in the interest of a one-sided theory. The theory supposed to pervert this writer's narrative is that the Jews of the Captivity constituted the true Israel, and they therefore had to be represented as doing everything of importance in the revival of the nation and in the development of the new Judaism. The author is supposed to have written it some two hundred and fifty years after the conventional date of the return, when in the absence of contemporary histories, the facts were necessarily obscure and easily misread.

These destructive views have all along been vigorously combated by Prof. Van Hoonacker, of Louvain, who maintains that there is no inconsistency between Ezra-Nehemiah on the one hand, and Haggai-Zechariah on the other ; and that there is hardly any fact in the Old Testament better authenticated than the restoration from Babylon under Cyrus. He is indeed inclined to think that there has been some dislocation of Ezra's narrative, and that he did not arrive at Jerusalem until a somewhat later period than is commonly supposed. But otherwise, he regards the book as historical in the full sense. Van Hoonacker has been supported in his views from a somewhat unexpected quarter. Prof. Meyer, of Halle, is known as a thoroughly competent scholar and a somewhat advanced critic. Last year he published a thorough-going work on "The Rise of Judaism," and in it he gives the results of his investigation of the value of the sources. His conclusion is that the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are largely made up of genuine official documents which have the highest historical value. He confesses the result is a surprise even to himself, as he was quite prepared to find it otherwise, and his conclusion may be regarded as the outcome of a sufficiently unbiassed examination. The discussion is not likely to come to an end for some time yet, but it will be difficult indeed to break the force of Meyer's arguments. If he is correct, then the history must stand, and we may rest assured that the statements of Haggai and Zecha-