

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Richard Baxter, in the town where he laboured so faithfully. From the noble Church where he delivered his message so fearlessly, Morse will long be missed. It is impossible to speak of what he was to his family and friends. The English Church has had many faithful sons, many who ought to have occupied high positions, and who have adorned their humble spheres in contented resignation. But there have been few more loyal, more intense in devoted service to a Master who had all their heart and all their love, than Francis Morse.

G. D. BOYLE.



ART. V.—HAVE THE TEN TRIBES BEEN LOST?

THE ten tribes of Israel—have they been lost? To most persons the question would seem to admit of but one answer: Certainly they are lost; do we not always speak of them as the “lost tribes”? After the fall of the northern kingdom they were not only carried into captivity, as at a later period were their brethren of Judah, but, unlike them, they in course of time disappeared or in some way ceased to be recognisable as Israelites in the land of their exile. Yet Jew and Christian believe that in the more or less remote future they will equally with their brethren be restored, if not to the Holy Land, at any rate to a national existence and the Divine favour.

Now if we consider the different ways in which a people may be lost, we shall see that to reconcile these beliefs but two alternatives are possible. For if a people disappear owing to their abandonment of their own language and religion, and the adoption of those of the peoples by whom they are surrounded, their racial identity is inevitably destroyed. The preservation of the Jewish race in our midst is entirely due to their obstinate adhesion to a faith which precludes intermarriage with Gentiles, for so many as form such alliances are speedily merged in the general population, and it is in consequence of this physical impossibility of further distinguishing such mixed families that the number of Jews recognisable as such does not increase perceptibly, notwithstanding the proverbial fertility of the race. In like manner the existence of the factors of different creeds and languages preserves the identity, even in the same villages, of the numerous petty nationalities of the Ottoman empire, and it is their absence that gives a seeming homogeneity to the nations of Europe, though originally composed of no less heterogeneous elements. In Hungary alone, where on the side of the Magyars pride

of race is superadded to the other factors, do we find the same absence of a tendency to coalescence among the several elements of the population.

If the ten tribes, then, are "lost," but still to be restored, they must either be hidden or *incog.*; that is, they must be located in some undiscovered region, or must exist as a distinct nation known to us by some other name. The former hypothesis is no longer admissible; Russian and other explorers have penetrated the remotest regions of Central Asia, and none but the wildest enthusiasts would venture to suggest the interior of Africa, Australia, or South America as the place of their concealment. The other alternative is that they must be sought among some peoples who have maintained their nationality more or less distinct, but whose true origin has been masked by their adoption of other languages and creeds. They have thus been identified with the Afghans with some degree of plausibility, not to mention such baseless conjectures as those which would recognise them in the Mexicans, Redskins, or English.

But once more I ask—Is there any evidence in history, sacred or profane, that they ever were lost in either of the usually accepted senses? I unhesitatingly answer, No! Except the outrageous legend in the apocryphal fourth Book of Esdras (xiii. 40-49), from which I suppose the whole belief has sprung, there is not one passage in Scripture or in the earlier Jewish, Christian or pagan writers in favour of the notion, but many in support of the contrary position.

Our Lord does, indeed, speak of being sent to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24), and bade His disciples (Matt. x. 6) go to them and not to the Samaritans or Gentiles. But, in the first place, the persons spoken of as "lost sheep" (*not* lost tribes) could not have been lost in the sense of being undiscovered or unrecognisable; and in the second, under the name of Israel our Lord did certainly not mean to indicate the ten tribes to the exclusion of the Jews, His own people according to the flesh.

St. James addresses his Epistle to the "twelve tribes scattered abroad," and St. Paul (Acts xxvi. 7) speaks of "our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night." Some persons understand these words as mere figures of speech; others admit that individuals of each tribe were still to be found among the Jews, like the prophetess Anna of the tribe of Aser, though the vast majority were lost.

I maintain, however, that the whole doctrine of the disappearance of the tribes which at one time formed the kingdom of Israel is a "tradition" which, like the wings of angels or the female sex of the seraphim, has no justification in

Scripture, though so long handed down from mouth to mouth that its origin is forgotten. Adhering strictly to facts and history, I shall not appeal to the poetical and the prophetic writings—not that I would cast doubts on their authority or value, but that, assuming the prophetic and the historical books to be equally of divine authority, should there seem to be any discrepancy between them, there can be no question as to their respective values as evidence on matters of fact.

We know how in a style in any degree rhetorical we read of armies being annihilated and cities razed to the ground, yet we meet the survivors and revisit the towns. The fervid language of Oriental poetry, the figures of prophetic rhapsody, cannot be set against a positive statement of an inspired scribe that certain men in certain places did such and such things. There is no evading evidence of this kind, and to such I shall adhere. These, then, are my assertions:

I. That the separation of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel was not so well defined and complete as is commonly supposed; and that besides the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, those of Simeon and the Danites of the south formed from a very early period parts of the kingdom of Judah.

II. That the deportation of the inhabitants of the northern kingdom was not by any means so complete as is generally believed; since, though the transjordanic provinces were entirely dispeopled and the inhabitants of the city of Samaria and of the surrounding district were deported and their place filled with Cutheans, there is no mention whatever of any captivity of Issachar, Zebulon or Asher, while we have evidence that many of Naphtali, Ephraim, and Western Manasseh remained in the land, and that after the fall of the kingdom of Israel the kings of Judah resumed their sovereignty over the northern provinces.

III. That while the Jews who returned from Babylon settled, at any rate for the most part, within the ancient territory of Judah and Benjamin, we find that of Zebulon, Issachar and Asher, the very area of the depopulation of which we have no evidence, occupied at a period not long subsequent to the return of the Jews from Babylon by a dense population of Israelites other than Jews proper.

The Cuthean Samaritan was loathed by the Jew as worse than a heathen, but the Galilean was recognised as a child of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and yet despised as of an inferior order. Why so regarded, if not as representing the once rebellious and schismatic and often apostate northern kingdom?

I am aware that this contempt in which the Galileans were held has been attributed to an alleged intermixture of Gentile

blood, and that much has been made of the expression "Galilee of the Gentiles." But we must remember that the name of Galilee was applied at different times to very different areas. The word itself means simply a "circle," and was originally appropriated to a small district around Kedesh in Naphtali, one of the cities of refuge (Josh. xx. 7), which formed the centre of the group of twenty villages granted by Solomon to Hiram (1 Kings xi. 11) for his services in providing cedar wood for the temple. It consequently became a Phœnician colony, and acquired the name of "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Isa. ix. 1), and in the time of the Maccabees the population was almost exclusively Gentile (1 Macc. v. 20-23). But this description in no way applies to the Roman province of Galilee, which included the whole area of the former kingdom of Israel, excepting Samaria, to the west of the river Jordan, the teeming population of which was as truly Hebrew as that of Judea, the birthplace or home of all the Apostles, and after the fall of Jerusalem the chief seat of the Rabbinical schools of learning.

Such are my theses.

In support of the first, I can show that whatever part the tribes of Simeon and Dan may have taken in the first act of disruption under Jeroboam so as to justify the description of the secession as that of ten tribes, those two very early returned to, or were brought under, the rule of the kings of Judah; for in the course of the wars with the Philistines we find these kings, from Rehoboam to Uzziah, taking, losing, retaking and fortifying cities lying within the territories assigned to these tribes at the division of the land by Joshua on the borders of the maritime tract where the Philistines so long and obstinately held their ground. Among the frontier towns which Rehoboam built and fortified (2 Chron. xi. 5, 11) were Gath, Elam, and Ajalon; and Uzziah, having retaken and dismantled Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod, fortified a number of new and stronger positions, and probably planted colonies within the land of the Philistines; *i.e.*, in the unappropriated portion of Simeon's inheritance. These, then, did not share in the fortunes of the kingdom of Israel.

My second thesis involves the more important question of the fate of the more northerly and numerous tribes; and here we find the extent and consequences of each successive Assyrian invasion is given with the utmost precision. First, in the days of Pekah (2 Kings xv. 29), Tiglath-pileser ravaged the transjordanic provinces and the contiguous territory of Naphtali, taking the inhabitants captive to Assyria. I need scarcely remark that the Galilee here spoken of is the small district to which Hiram gave the name of

Cabul, and has no connection with the Roman province of Galilee. The depopulation of the country to the east of Jordan, the inheritance of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, was as nearly as possible complete, and in our Lord's time the inhabitants, Gadarenes, etc., were heathen. That of Naphtali, as we shall see, was less so. The place of their exile is described (1 Chron. v. 26) as Halah, Habor, Hara, and Gozan in Assyria, and in the cities of the Medes, the country now known as Armenia and Koordistan.¹ In the reign of Hoshea, the king of Israel, Samaria itself was captured after a three years' siege by Shalmanezzer (2 Kings xvii. 6), and its inhabitants transported to the same regions as their brethren and to the cities of the Medes, a colony of Cutheans and others from Babylon, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim (2 Kings xvii. 24) being planted by the conqueror in "Samaria and the cities thereof." Nothing is said of any evacuation or colonization of the rest of the country, and we know that the descendants of these Cutheans long continued under the name of Samaritans to form a compact and well-defined community, surrounded on all sides by Jews, but perfectly distinct from their neighbours.

Any deportation of the other tribes rests on pure assumption, unsupported by a tittle of evidence. On the contrary, we have ample evidence that they remained in the land, and for the most part acknowledged the political and religious supremacy of the Jewish monarchy.²

King Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxx. 1, 10, 11, 18 and xxxi. 1) summoned to the restoration of the temple worship "all Israel and Judah," and "wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh," imploring them not "to be like their fathers and brethren, who had been given to desolation." He speaks of them as "a remnant escaped out of the hand of the King of Assyria." The posts "went from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even to Zebulon," and "divers of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulon humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem." After the Passover, it was found that a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulon, had not cleansed themselves in strict conformity with the law. After this Hezekiah made a progress through his kingdom for the purpose of exterminating idolatry, thus asserting his authority over the whole land.

¹ In 2 Kings xv. 29, Assyria alone is named, and Hara is omitted in 2 Kings xvii. 6. אֲרָץ from אֶרֶץ however, plainly indicates a mountainous region, such as the area in question; the mountains of Media or Assyria.

² I grant that 2 Kings xvii. 18 states that "none were left but the tribe of Judah only," but in the light of what follows here one must take it to mean as an independent state.

"Then all the children of Israel returned every man to his possession into their own cities," not only in "Judah and Benjamin," but also in "Ephraim and Manasseh" (xxxv. 1). Josiah did the same (xxxiv. 6) throughout Simeon, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Naphtali (xxxiv. 6, 7, 33); and after that (xxxiv. 17, 18) we find the remarkable statement that the "children of Israel" kept such a passover as "the kings of Israel" had not kept "since the days of Samuel the prophet." Now, since none of the kings of the dynasties of Jeroboam, Baasha, Omri, or even Jehu had ever kept a passover at all, the kings of Israel here alluded to must be Saul, David, and Solomon before the separation, and Hezekiah since the reunion of the northern and southern tribes.

In short, the use of the words "children" and "kings of Israel" shows that no sooner had the fall of Samaria and its king ended the schism, than the conscious unity of the children of Jacob or Israel reasserted itself, and the name which had so long been appropriated by a part—because the larger part—of the family, became again, as it had been of old, the common designation of the race; and it is interesting to notice that while Ezra and Nehemiah frequently apply the name of Israel to those who returned with them from Babylon, and who, as we learn from the list of names and localities, belonged mainly to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, those who remained behind in the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the Persian empire, from India to Ethiopia (Esth. viii. 9) and who must have included the captives from Reuben, Gad, and parts of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Naphtali, are invariably called Jews in the Book of Esther, the name probably then, as since, implying a degree of contempt.

In consequence of the obstinate resistance presented to the Babylonish, as at a later period to the Roman, arms by the inhabitants of the capital, the brunt of Nebuchadnezzar's vengeance and the deportation that followed was confined to the territory of Judah and Benjamin. Those who returned after seventy years belonged almost exclusively to these tribes, because the others had not shared in the Babylonish captivity.

But to return to the northern tribes: I have shown that while Simeon and Southern Dan were absorbed into and shared the fortunes of the kingdom of Judah, the tribes of Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and a large proportion of those of Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasseh were never removed from their ancient homes, but that their descendants were none other than the Galileans of the Gospel history; and that they, therefore, were not lost, at any rate till long after the fall of the Roman empire.

But what became of the captives carried away from

the transjordanic provinces by Tiglath-pileser, and from Samaria and the surrounding country by Shalmanezar? Were they, have they not been lost? Nearly 250 years after we are told by Ezra (1 Chron. v. 26) that they were still in the place of their exile: 550 years later, or after 800 years, Josephus (A. xi. 5, 2) says that "beyond the Euphrates" there were in his time "an immense multitude" of the ten tribes "not to be estimated by numbers."

In the fifth century, or after the lapse of 1,100 years, Jerome (tom. vi. 9, Ed. Vallarsii: Veronæ, 1736), in his notes on Hosea i. 6, 7 says, "Unto this day the ten tribes are subject to the kings of Persia, nor has their captivity ever been loosed;" and again, "The ten tribes inhabit at this day the cities and mountains of the Medes." Are any of them there still? Considering the migratory habits of Jews in general, it would not be a matter for surprise if they were not, but Dr. Asahel Grant, who laboured among the Nestorians for many years, has demonstrated the identity of that people with the Israelitish exiles beyond a doubt. To his work,¹ and to the Rev. John Wilkinson, who availed himself of the recent visits of Deacon Abraham and other Nestorians to this country to learn the fact from their own mouths, I am indebted for this part of my answer. Here, from the banks of a river which still bears its ancient name of Khabour, to the shores of the lakes Wan and Oorumieh are a people numbering a million and a half, speaking Syriac, the language of Israel in their captivity, with strong Jewish features and Jewish names, calling themselves Ben i Israel, children of Israel, part of them professing the Jewish faith, and part Christians; these, however, retaining all such Jewish customs and ceremonials even to the peace offerings (Lev. vii.), vows, and purifications as are not incompatible with a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, just as did the Jewish Christians and the Apostle St. James. They are called Apostates by their unconverted brethren, Nestorians by ecclesiastical writers (not by themselves), because they supported Nestorius in his opposition to the expression Θεοτόκος, without however adopting his heresy concerning the Incarnation. They themselves state that some of their forefathers having gone up to Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost, "the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia," of whose presence the writer of the Acts makes mention, caught the Pentecostal fire, and preached Jesus to their countrymen on their return, and that at their request the Church of Jerusalem sent down the Apostles SS. Thomas, Thaddeus, and Bar-

¹ "The Nestorian Christians, or the Lost Tribes." Murray & Co., 3rd Edition, 1844.

tholomew, names still honoured among them, to confirm them in their faith. What a wonderful light does not this throw on the address of the Epistle by St. James, Bishop of Jerusalem, "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad"!

Besides these, the various communities of Jews in Central Asia, in China, in India, and elsewhere, some of whom have no records of the captivity at Babylon, or acquaintance with the later Scriptures, who do not keep the feast of Purim or of the dedication of the second temple, and the St. Thomas' Christians of Travancore, may represent the rest of the strangers scattered, the dispersed among the Gentiles, descendants of the exiles of Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, and Ephraim.

But no one has yet ventured to point out, I believe, as I have done in this paper, the entire absence of any evidence of a deportation of the maritime tribes, and the very partial depopulation of any region to the west of the Jordan, or to suggest the identity of these tribes with the despised Galileans. For myself, I believe that these are still in our midst, and, as would follow from the relative populations of Galilee and Judea, in numbers far greater than those of the Jews of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

The Jews, as we know them in Europe, Africa, and Western Asia, are divided into two great families or classes, distinguished among themselves as Sephardim and Ashkenazim, and among others as Spanish and German or Polish Jews, the Hebrew names being respectively the equivalents of Spanish and German. They have the same creed, observe the same rites, and marriages, though discouraged, are not forbidden between them; but they worship in different synagogues, and are buried in different cemeteries. Except when they have Hebrew names, the surnames of the former are Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, or Italian, and those of the latter German, Dutch, or Polish. Individuals of each are found in every country, but generally the former are spread over Northern Africa, Italy, and Portugal, and the latter over Holland, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Roumania, England and Turkey forming the opposite points of contact.

But the most remarkable contrast exists between the general character of the two classes. The Sephardim are liberal, generous, and most honourable in all their dealings, as anyone who has had much to do with them will testify; while the Ashkenazim, though I admit there are many bright exceptions, are marked by the commercial vices that have brought the name of Jew into ill repute.¹ It is not easy to explain and

¹ When the position of the Jews of Roumania, some years ago, attracted the sympathy of Western Europe, M. Geo. Ghika, ex-premier, stated in a

excuse their practices as the outcome of generations of Christian ill-usage, for if there be a difference, the Sephardim have been the more downtrodden in the past. But why this difference if it be not one of race, and the conscious superiority of the Sephardim, and their scarce concealed contempt of the others? Indeed, not only do the Sephardim consider themselves as belonging to a higher caste, but many of them assert that they alone are the tribe of Judah. If we admit the Galileans to have been the descendants of the northern tribes; if we remember how, in the wars between the Ptolemies and the Jews, thousands and hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem were carried into Egypt; and if we then consider what would be the natural lines of further emigration and dispersion, whether in search of trade or in escape from persecution, it is not unreasonable to conclude that these two families are none other than the representatives respectively of the proud Jews of Judah and of the humble, despised—perhaps deservedly despised—Galileans.

EDWARD F. WILLOUGHBY.



ART. VI.—"FIFTY YEARS OF A GOOD QUEEN'S REIGN."

Fifty Years of a Good Queen's Reign. By A. H. WALL. Pp. 330. Ward and Downey.

MR. A. H. WALL has produced a book which will be read with pleasure at this remarkable juncture in our national history. The author occupies the vantage-ground of one who has lived through the entire period of which he writes. In a sense, therefore, the work may be said to consist of the reminiscences of one who is sufficiently patriotic to be in hearty sympathy with the changes for the better which have been brought about in the country during the last half-century, a period more remarkable for general progress than any other taken notice of in history. The celebration of a royal jubilee at all is one of the rarest things in our national annals; and those of Henry III., Edward III., and George III. had little or nothing associated with them to inspire that joy and gratitude which animate us in this jubilee year of Queen Victoria. In the older days, especially in mediæval times, the country was,

letter to the *Times*, that his countrymen would gladly admit the Spanish Jews, who numbered amongst them many of their most eminent professional men, to full citizenship, if it were possible to make the distinction in law and practice.