

Were the Ten Tribes of Israel ever Lost ?

What saith the Scripture?

BY

Rev. A. H. BRAYNE, B.A.



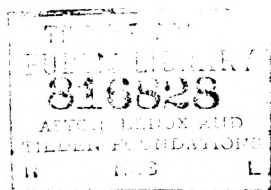
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OPINIONS REGARDING THIS BOOK.

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"Your valuable paper."

The Rev. E. L. LANGSTON, *Secretary of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews*, writes:—

"MY DEAR BRAYNE,—. . . May I congratulate you most warmly on the splendid and unique way that you have dealt with the subject? The Anglo-Israelites will find it a hard nut to crack. May God bless and use it for His glory and for the opening of the blind eyes of many who are enamoured of this strange theory."

The Rev. DAVID BARON, *Editor of "The Scattered Nation," a Record of the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel*, writes:—

"DEAR MR. BRAYNE,—. . . I have read through your MS. with much pleasure. It is a thorough and original study of the Scriptural evidence on this important subject, and ought to be very useful to those who are really desirous to know the truth about the supposed lost Tribes, and are not blinded by preconceived notions. The fanciful and often absurd 'Identifications' of Anglo-Israelism are all based on the supposition that the Ten Tribes were 'lost,' but you very clearly show from Scripture that the postulate is a false one, and that the theory built upon it is therefore baseless. I hope your MS. will be published. . . .

"I regard Anglo-Israelism as one of the greatest delusions of these latter days."

The Rev. J. POLITEYAN, B.A., F.R.G.S., *Organizing Secretary London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews*, writes:—

"DEAR BRAYNE,—I have read your MSS. with deep interest. I think you have thrown fresh light on the return of the Ten Tribes. I wish the book a very wide circulation."

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PREFACE.

This little book contains the results of study which I felt led to undertake since coming to Shirley, for the sake of others.

I am fully convinced that the question dealt with, viz., where are the Ten Tribes of Israel to-day? can be satisfactorily settled by a study of the Scriptures and the Scriptures only, without referring to any other book whatsoever. For the testimony of Scripture on the point is clear and decisive. And my prayer is that this little effort will under God lead people in dependence upon the Spirit of God to study their Bibles more, in preference to studying books on the Bible.

A. H. BRAYNE.

65, Anglesea Road, Shirley, Southampton.

October, 1917.

Were the Ten Tribes of Israel ever Lost ?

None of the Tribes of Israel can ever be lost, for God's Word tells us clearly that that people will always be a separate marked people. "Lo, the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Numb. xxiii. 9). Therefore the whole nation of Israel is always to be in evidence and cannot ever be lost.

The people in precaptivity times were divided into Twelve Tribes and the Tribe of Levi. But at the present day the distinction of the Tribes has for a long time entirely disappeared. That the Jews of the present day are the descendants of all the Tribes of Israel follows necessarily from the fact established in this paper, namely, that all the Tribes of Israel returned from the Captivity in the time of Ezra.

That there are to be two distinct gatherings of the whole nation from Captivity is most clearly taught by Isaiah in Chapter

xi., vv. 11-13: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people." And verse 12 tells us plainly what is included in the expression "the remnant of His people," namely, "The outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah." In other words, the whole nation of Israel is referred to, and is to be gathered a second time from Captivity before Christ's Millennial reign. Now when did the first gathering of the whole nation take place? If it did not take place in the time of Ezra there is no other time at which it is possible to place it. So that the testimony of the Prophet Isaiah shuts us up to the conclusion which is established in this paper, namely, that all the Tribes must have returned from Captivity as a result of Cyrus' decree in the days of Ezra.

11 *The cause of the split in the nation of Israel.* There seemed a constant tendency to jealousy among the Tribes of Israel. Evidence of this is seen in the rebellion of Korah (Numb. xvi.) and in the events in the time of Jephthah (Judges xii.). And there was jealousy between Judah and the other Tribes

in the reign of David (2 Sam. xix. 41-43). And this tendency flamed out on the death of Solomon, and resulted in the sinful split from Judah of the Ten Tribes in the days of Jeroboam. It is quite wrong to suppose that God set His seal of approval on the breaking away of the Ten Tribes from Judah by directing His prophet Ahijah to anoint Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, beforehand. God foresaw what was coming, and it was not His purpose to interfere with the power of choice of the Ten Tribes, but He let them go their own way, and perhaps to avoid chaos He made provision against it beforehand by directing His prophet to privately anoint Jeroboam (1 Kings xi. 29). And the split in the nation was overruled in the providence of God as a punishment to the house of Solomon for his idolatry.

HOSEA AND AMOS.

The Kingdom of the Ten Tribes was an absolute failure, and never justified its existence in separation from Judah. As witness the prophecies of Hosea and Amos, its sins were many and grievous. Under a succes-

sion of godless kings it entered upon a course of rebellion against God's commandments, and sank lower and lower, until it got into such an appallingly corrupt state that the just judgment of God descended upon it and swept it "from off the face of the Earth" (Amos ix. 8) at the Assyrian Captivity.

The Kingdom of the Ten Tribes was to cease to exist for ever. God says through the Prophet Hosea, "I . . . will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel" (Hos. i. 4). "I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away" (Hosea i. 6). "But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God" (Hosea i. 7). Thus the doom of extinction was pronounced upon the kingdom of Israel, but not upon the kingdom of Judah. Now it is plain that though the kingdom of the Ten Tribes was to cease to be for ever on account of their wickedness, yet the Ten Tribes of Israel themselves were not to be destroyed altogether, but were to survive, God says, in Hosea iii. 4, 5, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without

a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days." Here the future destiny of the Ten Tribes is clearly foreshadowed; they were to abide many days without a king, and in the latter days they would return to their allegiance to the house of David, which they had cast off on the death of Solomon. Thus it will be as God said through Ahijah, "I will . . . afflict the seed of David, but not for ever" (1 Kings xi. 39). Other passages in Hosea and Amos indicate the tremendous punishment that is to descend upon the kingdom of the Ten Tribes for its iniquity. The extinction of the kingdom is set forth by way of figure in Chapter xiii. 1, 3, "When Ephraim spake trembling he exalted himself in Israel, but when he offended in Baal he died." "Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven away with

the whirlwind out of the floor and as the smoke out of the chimneys." And again, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." Their kingdom was doomed for ever, but the Ten Tribes were to survive, for the promise to the faithful remnant among them is, "But in me is thine help" (chap. xiii. 9). In the fearful tribulations that are to come upon the Ten Tribes for their iniquities God will take care of and preserve the remnant that are faithful to Him; not one grain of wheat shall be lost. "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." "All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword" (Amos ix. 9, 10). The utter destruction of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes and yet the survival of the Ten Tribes themselves is clearly indicated in Amos ix. 8. "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord."

Now Hosea and Amos are the earliest prophecies that deal with the destinies of the Ten Tribes of Israel. All the Prophets of the Old Testament that come after Hosea and Amos fall strictly into line with them. For the later prophets make it plain that *the Ten Tribes as a separate community have no future at all*. A conclusive indication of this is that the future blessings that are to come on Israel (*i.e.*, the whole nation), and through Israel to the other nations of the earth, in fulfilment of the promises to Abraham, are universally associated with Judah and Jerusalem, the "Israel" of the Ten Tribes occupying a subordinate position or being ignored altogether. For proof of this see, for example, Joel ii. 28-32, iii. 16-21; Micah iv. 1-4; Isa. ii. 4, ix. 1-7, xi., xii.; Jer. xxiii., etc., etc.

ISAIAH.

This attitude towards the Ten Tribes is especially seen in the prophecies of Isaiah. Although the days of Isaiah's ministry began in the days Uzziah, king of Judah, long before the carrying captive of the king-

dom of the Ten Tribes, yet his prophecy is addressed to Judah and Jerusalem only (Isa. i. 1, ii. 1). But although the Ten Tribes are ignored in the address of the Prophet, and apparently left out of consideration, this is not really the case; they are in some way included in the purview of the prophet. In Chapter ii. Millennial blessings are set forth. And it is particularly emphasized that what Isaiah saw was concerning Judah and Jerusalem, and the whole house of Jacob are identified with Judah and Jerusalem (Isa. ii. 3, 5, 6). The Kingdom of the Ten Tribes is still standing, and yet its separation from Judah is absolutely ignored in Isa. ii. The prophecy, although specially said to be concerning Judah and Jerusalem, contains names of places within the boundaries of the Northern Kingdom of the Ten Tribes, without a hint that they did not at the time belong to Judah and Jerusalem. See Chapter ii. 13, where there is mention of Lebanon on the northern border of the Kingdom of "Israel" and Bashan on the east of Jordan. Again, in Chapter iv. the separation of the Ten Tribes from Judah

is ignored, it being clearly taught that the remnant of all Israel in the latter days will be identified with Zion and Jerusalem.

The reference to the "Israel" kingdom seems to get more and more clear the further we read on into the prophecy of Isaiah. In Chapter v. 7 we have a clear reference to it, "For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant."

The Ten Tribes are thus included in the purview of the Prophet, and although the kingdom is still in existence, yet they are treated as of no importance and as subordinate to Judah, for in the parable of the vineyard he addresses his remarks solely to Judah and Jerusalem (Isa. v. 3).

We see how thoroughly in keeping Isaiah's prophecies are with the earlier prophecies of Hosea and Amos in thus disparaging the importance of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, for their foreshadowing the utter destruction of that kingdom is in reality the key to explain his attitude to it. There is a subtle agreement between Isaiah and the earlier prophets in his treatment of it as though

it was an unimportant appendage to the kingdom of Judah, the Prophet including the Ten Tribes in his reference, but not honouring them by addressing them directly. Isaiah refers to the crushing judgment by which that kingdom was to be "swept off the face of the earth" in Chapter vii. 8. "Within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken that it be not a people." In Isa. viii. and ix. we have the utter destruction of the northern kingdom again predicted in accordance with the prophecies of Hosea and Amos. The Assyrian flood is to completely engulf the Ten Tribes, but Judah is only to be attacked, "He shall come up against Judah" (viii. v. 8), which, unlike the Ten Tribes, was not to be completely swamped by the Assyrian flood. In close proximity with these forewarnings of tremendous judgment upon the Ten Tribes the prophecies of the glorious destiny of God's people under their Messiah are associated with Judah and Jerusalem. The subordination (which is to cease when Shiloh comes) of the Ten Tribes to Judah and Jerusalem (Gen. xlix. 10) is distinctly implied in

Chapter xi. 13. "The envy of Ephraim shall depart." Whom do we envy? Those who are in a better position than ourselves. So it is said, referring to the conditions under Christ's reign: "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim," that is to say, by attempting to be tyrannical in her treatment of Ephraim.

It is thus manifest from the Prophets of the Old Testament that the Ten Tribes as a separate community have no future. In keeping with this is the fact that the claim of the Ten Tribes to be "Israel" is often ignored in Holy Scripture, the term Israel often being applied to Judah. This is frequently the case in 2 Chronicles. Also we find the term "House of Israel" applied to the Judah kingdom in Isa. viii. 14, and frequently in the Prophet Ezekiel, see Chapters viii., xii., xiii., xiv., etc. Undoubtedly Judah, although towards the end of the kingdom she became very wicked and idolatrous, and, in fact, for a short time worse than the "Israel" kingdom (Jer. iii. 6-11), had a better claim to the use of the Covenant name "Israel" than the Ten Tribes. This may

have been the reason for the frequent adoption by the inspired writers of the name "Ephraim" to designate the kingdom of the Ten Tribes.

In Isa. xxviii. "the drunkards of Ephraim" are addressed, showing that then the northern kingdom was still in existence; but in Isa. xxxvi. 19 we learn from Sennacherib's message to the people of Judah through the Rabshakeh that the northern kingdom of Israel had then been taken into captivity. And as one reads the latter chapters of Isaiah the conviction grows upon one that several passages are intended as appeals to the better element among the captives of the Ten Tribes. See Isa. xlii. 22-xliii. 7. The passage concerns a people who are in a furnace of affliction (xliii. 1, 2) and who are in captivity (xliii. 5, 6), the godly remnant among the captives being addressed. And xlii. 22-25 may have references to the calamities that overtook them at the time of their being taken captive. Chapter xliii. 14 is perhaps a hint to them that God, in order to prepare the way for their return to their land, will humiliate Babylon, which came to

pass on the conquest of it by Cyrus. Again, in vv. 22-28, is not Israel given the assurance of the Divine forgiveness? Following this line of thought, Chapter xlv. is an appeal to them to recognise the emptiness of the idol worship which they see all around them in the land of captivity. And in verse 21 God assures them that they will not be forgotten of Him. And then, from that point to Chapter xlv. 4, God assures them of His forgiveness, and that through His servant. Cyrus, He will open a way for their return to Jerusalem. It would appear that Cyrus is referred to again in Chapter xlv. 13. "He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price, nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts." This exposition, which we have been tracing in these chapters, is confirmed by xlv. 25, where, apparently carrying on the same argument, Isaiah concludes by words which include the Ten Tribes, saying, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." This verse is an indication that the purview of his previous argument must have included the Ten Tribes. Again, Isa. xlv. vv. 3-13 is a direct appeal

to the captive Ten Tribes to lead them to give up idolatry and to return to Jerusalem when the time comes, for God says, "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." And then follows in Chapter xlvii. a description of the judgment upon Babylon, which is to be a sign to Israel that the opportunity to return from captivity is drawing nigh (cf. Is. xlv. 14). In Chapter xlviii. the prophet turns from the Ten Tribes to appeal to the kingdom of Judah, which is not yet taken into captivity. Having previously intimated to Hezekiah the coming Babylonian captivity (Chap. xxxix. 6), he here foreshadows their deliverance from it (xlviii. 20). In Chapter xlix. 6 we have a distinct reference again. which includes the Ten Tribes.

JEREMIAH.

Let us pass on to the prophecies of Jeremiah. These fall strictly into line with the previous prophecies of Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos. The restoration of the Ten Tribes to Zion is foretold in Chapter iii. 14, where God says, "I will take you one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion,"

and the context shows that "Israel," as distinct from "Judah," is here referred to. It is interesting to note how the restoration of the Ten Tribes to Judah is in several places spoken of as a special Divine act. God says here, "I will take you . . . and I will bring you to Zion." In Ezek. xxxvii. 19 God says, "I am taking the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah." We might compare these passages with Ezra i. 5, where some of the returning captives are described as "all them whose spirit God had stirred up." These words refer, as we shall prove later on, especially to the returning captives of the Ten Tribes, indicating that it was by the special stirring up of God's Spirit that they were led to return along with Judah to Jerusalem.

In passing, one should notice that Jer. iii. 18, "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers," speak not of

the coming of Israel and Judah from captivity, as some maintain, but of the amicable relations that will exist between them in Christ's reign, when the captivity is a thing of the past, for verse 17 makes it plain that at that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall be gathered to it, as prophesied in Isa. ii.

In Jer. v. the fearful wickedness of the people of Jerusalem and Judah is set forth, and consequent appalling judgments are predicted. But it is emphasized that in the overwhelming judgments that shall come upon them God will not make a full end (v. 10 and 18). In verse 11 "Judah" and "Israel" are associated together in such a manner as to suggest that in the mind and purpose of God the division in the nation is regarded as non-existent. And it seems plain, from vv. 10, 11 especially, that Jerusalem is regarded as the capital city of both the Houses of Israel, the division in the nation being ignored. All this is calculated to convince the Ten Tribes that it was God's will for them to throw in their lot with Judah again.

From Jer. xxx. 3 it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that God was intending to bring to an end the captivity of "Israel" and "Judah" at the same time. What, then, could better prepare the minds of the Ten Tribes and make them ready to return with Judah in the time of Ezra?

In Jer. xxxi. 1 the division in the nation is ignored, and evidently has no consideration in God's purposes. God says, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel." Chapters xxx. and xxxi. of Jeremiah seem to be largely a special appeal to the Ten Tribes to convince them that it was God's will for them to join themselves on to Judah again. The promise of the new Covenant in Jer. xxxi. pre-supposes the previous return from captivity of the House of Israel quite as much as of the House of Judah; the one is not to be to any greater extent than the other in captivity. And yet we are asked by some to believe (notwithstanding the clear testimony of the New Testament to the contrary) that the House of Israel was conspicuous by its absence when the Messiah, the Mediator of the New Covenant, came to

offer the New Covenant to God's earthly people, and that our Lord in His earthly ministry dealt only with one House, that of Judah! Whereas, according to the prophecy, it was to be offered to both Houses at the same time. It may be argued, however, that this prophecy is not yet fulfilled; that Israel has not yet accepted the New Covenant, so that the promise of the New Covenant, "I will put my law in their inward parts," has not been fulfilled for them. But although this is the case, yet for all that it might have been fulfilled, for there is no doubt that it was offered to both Houses of Israel by our Saviour and then by the Apostles afterward.

Before leaving the pre-captivity prophets for the next link in the chain of evidence we will notice one more passage in the prophet Ezekiel. Chapters xxxvi. and xxxvii. were imparted to Ezekiel very soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, about which Ezekiel receives news in Chapter xxxiii. 21.

EZEKIEL XXXVI.

teaches us most distinctly that *it is the*

mind and purpose of God to gather together the whole nation of Israel and restore them in the near future to their own land, the Ten Tribes, as well as Judah and Benjamin and Levi. For God addresses the land of Israel, and says that though the heathen have made it desolate and boast that they have it in possession, yet they shall be ashamed of their boasting, for the mountains shall shoot forth their branches and yield their fruit to God's people of Israel, "for they are at hand to come" (verse 8). "For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited and the wastes shall be builded" (verse 10). Thus we are led to anticipate in the near future a gathering of the whole nation of Israel, the Ten Tribes and Judah, to put to shame the boasting of the surrounding heathen. How, then, could this possibly be said to be fulfilled if the Ten Tribes of Israel never returned, but became lost? For anyone who believes that the Word of God means

what it says the idea does not admit of discussion. Thus the Spirit of God distinctly leads us to anticipate a gathering of the whole nation in the time of Ezra. Again, the same conclusion is clearly to be drawn from the latter part of the chapter, where we are evidently to take the term "House of Israel" as referring to the whole nation as in the first part of the chapter. We are reminded in verses 17 and following of the sin of the people of Israel, and of their being scattered as a consequence among the heathen and dispersed through the countries. And we are told how they have profaned the name of God in the countries where they were driven. And God said that He would sanctify His name in the eyes of the heathen, before whom Israel had profaned it, by causing the Children of Israel to be gathered again to their own land. Again one must ask how could this be fulfilled if Ten of the Tribes of Israel, whom everybody would recognise as part of the same nation with Judah, never returned from the captivity at all, but were mysteriously lost?

EZEKIEL XXXVII.

Verses 15-20 speak of the final healing of the division in the nation of Israel. The Prophet is commanded to take two sticks, one for Judah and one for Israel, and before the eyes of the captives to join them together as a token and pledge of the final healing of the division in the nation. "And when the children of the people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these?, say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Israel his fellows. and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes." Now the first thing to be said with regard to this prophecy is that it means the incorporation of the Ten Tribes into the kingdom of Judah. *The Ten Tribes are to become Jews.* Secondly, this joining of the Ten Tribes of Israel on to Judah was to be done by the act of God; God Himself was to do the joining together of

Israel to Judah; and, thirdly, the joining was to be done publicly. Now, it will be our purpose to show that this was most literally and absolutely fulfilled in the time of Ezra, when there was undoubtedly a great public joining together of the two parts of the nation. An objection commonly urged against this exposition is that the joining of the sticks is closely associated with the final gathering of Israel to the land of Canaan to be reigned over by one king. This latter has not yet taken place, therefore it is urged the joining of the two sticks closely associated with it also cannot have taken place, but is still future. The exposition cannot be maintained, for the following reasons:

(1) It is a well-known feature of Old Testament prophecy for the near and the far-off future to be placed in close contact.* In Isa. ix. we have Christ's reign upon the throne of David, which is still future, spoken of immediately after the prophecy of his

* A discussion of the why and the wherefore of this, although a fascinatingly interesting problem, is outside our present purpose.

birth, as though the one was to follow close upon the other. And yet we now know that there are nearly two thousand years between the two. In Isa. lxi. 1-3, again, we have a passage quoted by our Lord Himself as being, as far as the first clause of verse 2, fulfilled when He was upon earth, but though nearly two thousand years have passed since His life on earth yet the second clause of verse 2 is still future. Up to the end of clause one of verse 2 was fulfilled in our Lord's earthly ministry; the second clause of verse 2, "the day of vengeance of our God," has not yet come to pass, for this is still the day of grace.

(2) We have already proved from Isa. xi. that there are to be two gatherings from captivity of the whole nation. It is obvious from this that the joining of the sticks should take place at the first gathering. And as the first gathering of the whole nation from captivity to their land cannot be placed at any other time except the time of Ezra, we are shut up to the conclusion (which will have ample proof presently) that the joining of the sticks took place in the time of Ezra.

(3) That the joining of the sticks is to take place prior to the final gathering of Israel back to their land is indicated in the language used to describe that event in Ezek. xxxvii. 21. God does not say here, "I will take the house of Israel and the house of Judah from among the heathen, whither they be gone . . . and I will make them one nation in the land." But He refers to the house of Israel and the house of Judah under a joint designation, as though at the time what is described takes place, the division in the nation no longer exists. He says, "I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone . . . and I will make them one nation in the land. Scattered as they are in every nation under heaven, they are still a nation, a separate people, but they are in a denationalized condition. When they return to their land they will be one nation, and they will no longer be split into two, and one king shall reign over them. The division into two kingdoms will be then a thing of the past and no longer existent. The words in verse 22 might quite legitimately be rendered in such a way as to

suggest the previous union of the two parts of the nation. "And they shall not be two nations again, and they shall not again be divided into two kingdoms." So that there is nothing in the prophecy that is really inconsistent with the idea that the division in the nation should be healed before the final gathering of Israel back to their land. We have thus reached this point, that the prophecy may be fulfilled in the time of Ezra; there is nothing against it.

(4) Further, a more literal rendering of verses 19 and 21 suggests that God is purposing in the near future to join together the two parts of the nation and to restore them to their own land. Verse 19 might be rendered: "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, *I am taking* the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand."

Again, verse 21 might be rendered: "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am taking the children of Israel from among the heathen,

whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side and bring them into their own land." Thus it would seem that both the uniting of the nation into one again and their restoration to their land was being purposed by God in the near future. To this it may be objected that verse 21 refers to the final gathering, when they will be presided over by one king in their land. The answer to this is that the gathering of the whole nation to the land under Ezra might have been the final gathering had the nation accepted their Messiah when He came.

THE EFFECT OF THESE PROPHECIES.

It is an important link in the chain of evidence in this matter to consider what would be the effect of all these prophecies which we have been reviewing upon the Ten Tribes, and how potent they would be toward convincing them that God wanted them in the future to throw in their lot again with Judah.

The conclusion to which the study of the Prophets shuts us up is that no right-minded Israelite could possibly have any manner of

doubt that the return with Judah to Jerusalem was the will of God for him.

The prophecies of Hosea and Amos, which disclose so clearly the destiny of the Ten Tribes of Israel, were given some 80 years before the solemn events which they foretold actually came to pass. These prophecies when they were first delivered brought down upon the prophets' heads derision and persecution at the hands of the people (Matt. xxiii. 29-31, 37; Acts vii. 52, etc.). But when after all they found to their cost that they were all literally fulfilled there must have been a considerable revulsion of feeling. When they found themselves invaded by a powerful and cruel enemy, and their nation, according to the prophecy, literally decimated (Amos v. 3) by the sword, the famine and the pestilence, and the remnant dragged away into captivity. This must have considerably chastened their feelings, and wrought in them a repentance for sin and a turning to God, at any rate on the part of some. And the conviction would grow in their hearts that Jehovah, whose will and commandments they had flouted, was after

all the true God, and that He, Who could foresee their calamities and cause them to come to pass, would also fulfil His other predictions as to the survival of the kingdom of Judah and of causing them to join themselves on to it again. They would thus see the wisdom of forgetting their jealousy of Judah and not fighting against the orderings of God's providence, and, when invited to do so, would be prepared to return to Judah to build the Temple in the time of Ezra. Thus we see by the line of teaching that God gave to the prophets He would convince the survivors of the Ten Tribes first that He was the true God, and then that He had no future for them in separation from Judah, and that it was His will for them to throw in their lot with Judah after the Captivity. That this was actually the effect of God's prophecies upon some of the surviving remnant of the Ten Tribes we infer from a passage in Ezekiel, Chapter xi. 15-17. "Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the House of Israel wholly, are they unto

whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the Lord: unto us is this land given in possession." Now, why should the people of the kingdom of Judah say that to the captive remnant of the Ten Tribes unless it was to discourage a feeling that was growing up amongst them in favour of a return to their own land? And then follows the answer of God through the Prophet Ezekiel. "Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God, I will even gather you from the people and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."

DANIEL IX.

Before coming to the Decree of Cyrus in the days of Ezra and the results which flowed from it, we will briefly look at the *testimony of Daniel* on the subject. Daniel's prayer for his people and the answer he had from

God in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks can be only a short time before the promulgation of the Decree of Cyrus. Daniel prays for the whole nation (Dan. ix. 7, 11), and in such a manner as to suggest that the two sections of the nation are at the time no longer sharply divided by jealousy of each other. Reading between the lines, the indications are, to say the least, that the common misfortunes that have overtaken both parts of the nation are already causing them to forget their mutual jealousies, and that the better element among the Ten Tribes are completely reconciled to throw in their lot with Judah again. For Daniel associates the whole nation with Jerusalem as their capital city (Dan. ix. 16). For the "thy people" of verses 16 and 19 are evidently the same as those more particularly described in verse 7 as the "men of Judah" and the "inhabitants of Jerusalem," and "All Israel that are near and that are far off." In the answer of God to the Prophet Daniel contained in the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks the same thing is evident that the whole nation is regarded as one, and is identified

with Jerusalem as its capital city. For it is again obvious that the "thy people" of the prophecy (verse 24) corresponds to those described in verse 7, which includes the entire people of Israel, the Ten Tribes as well as Judah, Benjamin and Levi. It is evident, therefore, from the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks that the division in the nation is no longer in existence at the commencement of that era. Unless we come to the chapter biassed with a preconception how can we fail to see the obvious truth of these observations? The era of the Seventy Weeks begins at a date subsequent to the return from captivity under Ezra; for the Decree referred to in the Prophecy "to restore and to build Jerusalem" is the one referred to in Nehemiah ii., where Nehemiah receives authority from the Persian Monarch (ii. 5) to rebuild Jerusalem. Therefore the era of the Seventy Weeks begins at a date subsequent (as we shall prove) to the public joining together of "Israel" and "Judah." For if the sharp jealousy between "Israel" and "Judah" still existed at the time of the

prophecy, and the division in the nation is, ex hypothesi, not to be healed up for millenniums, in fact, not until, according to all expositors, long after 69 of the Seventy Weeks have run their course, how can the Ten Tribes be truthfully identified with Jerusalem as their capital city and associated with Judah, with which, during the first 69 weeks, as a body they have nothing whatever to do? The idea is unworthy of serious discussion.

EVIDENCE IN THE BOOK OF EZRA.

The way is now cleared for a sifting of the evidence for the return of the Ten Tribes from captivity in the time of Ezra. We will first of all consider the terms of the Decree of Cyrus and the results of its promulgation as described in Ezra i. "Thus hath said Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you from all His people, let his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is Judah,

and build the house of Jehovah the God of Israel, (He is the God,) which is in Jerusalem." With regard to this, the following points are to be noticed. (1) The Decree of Cyrus was *published throughout all the dominions of Cyrus*. The first words of the proclamation indicate that Cyrus' conquests are now complete, and, therefore, this must have included the parts where the survivors of the Ten Tribes were living. So that the Decree was published to the Ten Tribes.

(2) In the Decree no tribes are mentioned, but it is an appeal to *all God's people*; hence (3) we gather this important point, that Cyrus' Decree was a direct invitation to the survivors of the Ten Tribes of Israel, as well as to those of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, to return to Jerusalem and build the Temple of God.

The Decree of Cyrus continues: "And all the ones remaining from all the places whither he went to sojourn." The use of the word "*all*," without any mention of the Tribes, shows again that all the Twelve Tribes and Levi are invited to return. Having thus invited all the Tribes of Israel

to return and build the Temple at Jerusalem, Cyrus then calls upon their heathen neighbours to give them all the assistance they can to ensure the success of the expedition. "And all the ones remaining from all places whither he went to sojourn let the men of his place help him with silver and with gold and substance and with cattle and with voluntary offering for the house of the God which is in Jerusalem." This is a most wonderful part of Cyrus' decree, nor were the subjects of Cyrus slow to take the hint. For what comes of the Decree? "And the heads of the Fathers belonging to Judah and Benjamin and the Priests and the Levites rose up and all whose spirit God stirred up, for to go up to build the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem. And all their neighbours assisted them with their hands, with the vessels of silver, with the gold and with the substance and with the cattle, and with the choice things besides that which all pressed upon them." Why! It was the time of their lives for the people of Israel! Seeing the usual hatred and contempt of their heathen neighbours thus wonderfully in

God's good providence exchanged in obedience to Cyrus' decree for practical help and sympathy, the last lingering shred of doubt as to their duty before God must have been for ever dissipated from the minds of all right-minded survivors of the Ten Tribes. But as the Scriptures testify, that nation is a very stiff-necked and hard-hearted people, and we shall see presently that many, despite all the encouragement they received, did not respond to the call of God.

In Ezra i. 5 we have a brief description of the returning captives. They are divided into the following: (1) Judah; (2) Benjamin; (3) the Priests; (4) the Levites; (5) all whose spirit God stirred up.

In Ezra ii. 64 we are told the number of the captives who returned, viz., 42,360. The question to determine, then, is how is this number to be distributed among the five heads above? How many belong to (1) Judah; to (2) Benjamin; to (3) the Priests; to (4) the Levites, the survivors (we take it) of the kingdom of Judah? And how many belong to (5) "all, whose spirit God stirred up"?

First, however, let us determine who are meant by "all whose spirit God had stirred up." They do not belong to Judah, Benjamin, the priests, or the Levites, for they have been already mentioned earlier in the verse. In Ezra ii. 70 we are told that "The priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims dwelt in their cities, and *all Israel* in their cities. It is plain, then, that all Israel must have returned from the captivity.

In Ezra iii. 1 we have mention of the children or sons of Israel gathering themselves together to Jerusalem. The expression is suggestive of the whole nation, as though there was now no longer any division. In Ezra iii. 11 they sang in praise to God, "He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel." This passage is still more suggestive of the return of the whole nation, for how could they sing such words if ten out of the thirteen tribes of Israel were still in captivity? These passages are not very decisive, but they are hints to us as to the truth on this matter; they are the straws

which are the certain indications which way the wind blows, namely, to show that the split in the nation no longer exists. In Chapter iv. 3 there is another straw in the mention of "the chief of the fathers of Israel," the writer being oblivious of any division in the nation. In Chapter vi. 16, 17 we have a passage where undoubtedly there is plain reference to the return of all the Tribes of Israel. And this passage is a leading passage to show us that all the passages we have already referred to in Ezra, which contain reference to the same people, include undoubtedly the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

In Ezra vi. 16, 17 we have an account of the offerings made at the Dedication of the newly-built Temple. "And *the children of Israel*, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, and offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for *a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.*" Again, in Chapter viii. 35 we learn that they "offered

burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel," clearly implying that one bullock was offered for each Tribe. From these passages it is evident that all the Tribes of Israel had returned from the captivity under Ezra. For it is quite certain that offerings would not be offered at the Temple of God for those who, in defiance of the will of God, had stayed away in the lands of captivity. So then we may gather from this that a sufficient number of each Tribe of Israel had returned to truthfully represent the return of each Tribe as a fact. There was then a gathering of the whole nation to Jerusalem and Judah in response to the decree of Cyrus. A perusal of the remaining chapters of Ezra would reveal many more straws similar to the ones mentioned. In Ezra v. 1 we learn that it was due to the prophecy of Zechariah and Haggai that the building of the Temple was resumed by the heads of the nation after it had been stopped for some time. Now, in the book of Zechariah we have the account of the exhortation by which Zechariah prevailed upon the people to resume the build-

ing. It is given in Chapter viii. of his prophecy, in verse 13 of which he addresses the returned captives as "O house of Judah and house of Israel." Thus we have the distinct testimony of the prophet Zechariah to the return of both "Israel" and "Judah" from the captivity in the time of Ezra.

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

Now, the evidence afforded by the language of Nehemiah points to a similar conclusion as that of the Book of Ezra. In Chapter i. 2 the captives who had returned are called "Jews." Later on in the chapter the same people are referred to by Nehemiah in his prayer as "the children of Israel," apparently identifying the returned captives at Jerusalem with the whole nation of Israel, evidently showing that the whole nation of Israel had returned from captivity, there being no consciousness whatever in Nehemiah of the continuance of the split in the nation in his day. He says in verse 6, "I pray before Thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel Thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have

sinned against Thee ”; and again in verse 10. “ Now these are Thy servants and Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy great power and by Thy strong hand.”

In Chapter ii. the people at Jerusalem are referred to as “ the children of Israel ” (verse 10) and again as “ the Jews ” (verse 16). These terms would seem to be interchangeable and to include the whole nation. In Chapter vii. we have a later version of the list of captives who returned under Ezra from captivity, which contains the same reference to “ all Israel ” which the earlier list contained (Neh. vii. 73). Chapter viii. 16 contains an interesting piece of evidence. We there find that one of the gates of the new city, the walls of which had lately been built, was called “ the gate of Ephraim.” Now Ephraim is the name constantly applied in Old Testament prophecy to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. Now, the fact that they called one of the new gates by this name is proof that a considerable and influential body of the returned captives must have belonged to the Ten Tribes. One of the gates of Jerusalem would surely not have been called by

the name of Ephraim had the Ten Tribes as a body remained away in the lands of captivity in defiance of the will of God.

In Nehemiah ix. we have the record of the public prayer that the Levites offered on the occasion of all the people entering into a solemn covenant to keep God's law. And all through the prayer, though there is evident reference to the sins of the whole nation in the past, there is an entire absence of any consciousness of a split in the nation. We can understand why the division in the nation is ignored if it is at the time a thing of the past and no longer exists, but not on any other supposition. It would seem that the whole nation of Israel is represented at this assemblage, for there is mention of "the children of Israel" assembling and of "the seed of Israel" separating themselves from all strangers (Neh. ix. 1, 2). In the prayer a summary is given of God's early deliverances, and then of the sins of the people and of their chastisements. There is nothing in the prayer to remind them of the division now healed up, for it is not the purpose of the Levites to open old sores and to revive old jealousies.

In verse 22 there is reference to the conquest of the part over Jordan that became the inheritance of Reuben, Gad, and half the Tribe of Manasseh, and in the following verses to the conquest of the whole land. These references would hardly have been appropriate to the occasion if Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh and the rest of the Ten Tribes had not returned from captivity. Verses 31 and 32 of the same chapter show us that the whole nation, including the Ten Tribes, is included in the prayer. "Let not all the trouble seem little before Thee that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and *on all Thy people*, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day." Here we have a direct reference to the captivity of the Ten Tribes at the hands of the king of Assyria, and it is clearly implied that it was a punishment that had descended on those for whom the prayer is offered, namely, the assembled multitude, who had now returned from the captivity and were looking upon the punishment as a thing of the past. There is also reference to the Judæan cap-

tivity, for all the trouble from before the Captivity of the Ten Tribes to the then present is included. Thus the conclusion from a study of this prayer is irresistible that sufficient to represent the whole nation of Israel had returned from captivity, and is represented here at the Temple of God at Jerusalem. In Neh. xi. we have strong testimony that a large body of the returned captives belonged not to Judah, but to the Ten Tribes. Owing to the fact that Jerusalem was rather depopulated it was arranged that one-tenth of the people should reside in Jerusalem and nine-tenths in the surrounding cities and country, and it was to be decided by lot who should migrate to Jerusalem. In reviewing the statements of Chapter xl. we must bear in mind that nine-tenths of the population dwelt outside Jerusalem. In verse 3 it tells us, "Now, these are the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem, but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, to wit, Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the Nethimins, and the children of Solomon's servants. And at Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children

of Judah and of the children of Benjamin." Notice here the evident contrast between "Israel" and "Judah." Judah, Benjamin, the priests, and the Levites dwelt in Jerusalem, the inhabitants of which were to be one-tenth of the population; the rest of Israel, the priests, and the Levites in all the cities of Judah. Does it not seem obvious that "Israel," as contrasted with Judah, forms by far the greater part of the population. But this conclusion must be modified somewhat by what we are told in the last verses of the chapter. We are given there a list of the "villages" in Judah occupied by the Tribe of Judah. Notice there that none of the places are called "cities," but they are called "villages" only. Judah and Benjamin dwelt in Jerusalem and in some "villages" in the country, whereas "Israel dwelt in all the cities of Judah" (verse 20). Verse 25, literally translated, is as follows: "And near the villages in their fields some of the sons of Judah dwelt, in Kirgath-Arba and its dependencies, etc." (Now, it does not say that all the inhabitants of these places were belonging to Judah, but that some of

Judah dwelt in them.) Thus it would appear from Neh. xi. that the major portion of the population belonged not to Judah, but to the Ten Tribes of Israel. In Neh. xii. 39 we have mention again of the gate of Ephraim, and in verse 47 of "all Israel." In Chapter xiii. 26 we have reference to Solomon being made king over "all Israel," and is it not obvious that if "all Israel" in xiii. 26 means the whole nation of Israel, the same expression in xii. 47 describing the returned captives must also mean the whole nation of Israel?

We have now given ample proof that No. (5) in the description of Ezra i. 5 (which is "All whose spirit God stirred up," and which does not contain any of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, as we proved) must refer to the returning captives of the Ten Tribes, whereas the other four divisions refer to the survivors of the kingdom of Judah.

We will now proceed to examine the evidence afforded by Ezra ii. We find there a list of the men who took part in the expedition from Babylon to Jerusalem, for in each case it is the number of the "sons" which is

given. Another fact to notice is that a large number of the returning captives are not classified at all. The number of the ones classified in the list falls far short of the total number of the whole congregation of 42,360. This helps us to see, perhaps, why it is that so many of the numbers given in the later list of Nehemiah vii. are in excess of the numbers given in the earlier list of Ezra ii., for it shows probably that many more of the unclassified multitude had, by the time the later list of Nehemiah was drawn up, put themselves under one or other of the leaders. For one thing becomes evident in studying Ezra ii., and that is that all the names mentioned are the names of men who actually took part in the expedition, and not the names of distant ancestors. For most of the names are mentioned in other parts of Ezra and Nehemiah in connection with other matters. The consequence is that the numbers mentioned in connection with each name cannot be their sons as we understand that word, but must refer to the number that each leader or "chief of the people" (as they are called in Neh. x. 14) took under

his wing. We will examine one or two instances, selecting at random. "The sons of Azgad, 1,222" (verse 12). The name of Azgad occurs in Neh. x. 15 as one of the signatories to the solemn covenant that the people entered into in the time of Nehemiah to keep the law of God. In common with several others from the list in Ezra ii., Azgad's name occurs also in connection with a later company of returning captives. This would seem to show that several of the chiefs of the people mentioned in Ezra ii. were really keen men in the service of God, and returned and collected together a second batch of captives whom they persuaded to return to Jerusalem. Hence we read of the second smaller expedition of captives from Babylon to Jerusalem mentioned in Ezra viii. Again, "The sons of Bezai, 323" (verse 17). Bezai is also a signatory of the solemn covenant to keep God's law in Neh. x.

"The sons of Pashur, 1,247" (verse 38). This man was one of the chief of the priests, and is mentioned again in connection with the work of the house of God (Neh. xi. 12), and also as a signatory of the solemn

covenant (Neh. x. 3). And so with regard to almost all the names in the list, they are not distant ancestors, but men who personally took part in the expedition. Hence the word "son" in Ezra ii. does not mean son by natural generation, but one subject to a commander or chief. Thus it is evident that we are given in Ezra ii. a list of the chiefs of the people and the numbers of which each chief was the leader. This use of the word "son" can be illustrated from other passages of Scripture. In Ezra ii. 1 we have mention of "the sons of the province," evidently meaning the subjects of the province. In 2 Kings we have mention several times of "the sons of the prophets," that is, those who had put themselves under the prophets for spiritual advice and instruction. Again, Ahaz says to the king of Assyria when he sends for his help, "I am thy servant and thy son" (2 Kings xvii. 7). And when in several places it speaks of "the chief of the fathers," this would appear to be a title of office in the community, those over whom they were set being their "sons." And so the numbers of

the "sons" of the various names given in Ezra ii. are not their blood relations, but the numbers of those who put themselves under the leadership of the various men whose names are given. We gather from this that though a few of the names can be connected with Judah, Benjamin and Levi, yet their "sons" in Ezra ii. might have belonged to any Tribe.

So far, then, we have reached this conclusion, that members of all the Twelve Tribes returned under Ezra, but from the list in Ezra ii. we can gather no certainty as to the number who belonged to Judah or to the Ten Tribes.

In fact, one of the first things the writer did in studying Ezra ii. was to find out what names belonged to the Judah kingdom and to add up the figures attached to them; the resulting number was 8,180, but for the reasons stated above this figure is really valueless. For we are absolutely in the dark as to the precise numbers that belonged to any Tribe.

The next point we will notice is that the only Tribes mentioned by name in Ezra as

having returned are those which originally belonged to the kingdom of Judah, namely, Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. The names of all the other Tribes are suppressed in the records. In accordance with the prophecy that went before, they were "*put with*" Judah, and became part of the house of Judah. In the suppression of all the names except those which belonged to Judah we see a most literal and absolute fulfilment of the prophecy of Ezekiel xxxvii. We see the stick of Joseph and the Tribes of Israel his fellows literally put with the stick of Judah and becoming one in God's hand. So thoroughly and literally was this accomplished that no certain record is allowed to remain that any of the returning captives had belonged to any other Tribe. Is it not as plain as the sun in the sky that all the returning captives of the Ten Tribes are "*put with*" Judah in Ezra ii.? Now this is the record of a Divine act; it is not of man, for we may be sure that had the survivors of the Ten Tribes been allowed to say they would have said that it was due to them that some more definite record of their return should be made, but

God ordered otherwise, for the Ten Tribes were to have no more recognition as a separate community at all. The omission of the mention of all the Tribes except Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, so far from proving that no other Tribes returned, was in direct fulfilment of prophecy. It was inconsistent with the letter and spirit of those prophecies for there to be separate mention again of the Ten Tribes; in fact, of any other Tribes than those which belonged formerly to Judah. For God had said that He would no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, but would sweep that wicked kingdom from off the face of the earth. And He also had disclosed how the Ten Tribes would survive; they would be allowed to return from Captivity *as Jews*; by being, in other words, incorporated into and becoming part of the house of Judah, as we see was brought to pass by God on the return from captivity in the time of Ezra (Hosea i. 6, 7; Amos ix. 8; Ezek. xxxvii. 19). A little thought will show the Divine wisdom in thus ordering matters. It was in order to ensure no repetition of the jealousy of Judah's supremacy and to take

away all occasion or excuse for another sinful split in the nation. Judah's supremacy over the other Tribes was to last, by the way, till Shiloh comes. On the supposition that the Ten Tribes were lost after the Assyrian captivity, Judah's supremacy came to an end on the death of Solomon, whereas it is to last to the latter days, that is to say, till Christ comes to reign. The idea that the Ten Tribes are lost can hardly, therefore, be reconciled with the inspired prediction given us in Gen. xlix. 10.

MORE DEFINITE PROOF.

We have arrived at this conclusion, that the Twelve Tribes actually did return from the captivity in the time of Ezra. But, so far, we have not come across anything to establish what proportion belonged to Judah and to the Ten Tribes. Can we attain a more definite result than this from the evidence given in Holy Scripture? I will now proceed to show that we can. But before passing on to unearth this further evidence from Holy Scripture it would be well to remark that supposing there was no further

evidence in Scripture as to how many belonged to the Ten Tribes among those who returned, it would be quite wrong to assume, therefore, that the majority of them belonged to Judah. For there is no proof whatever in the evidence we have encountered so far that more did belong to Judah than to the Ten Tribes. Let us now proceed to find this further evidence on the matter. The first point I would bring out is the terrible sweeping nature of the judgment that overwhelmed both parts of the Israelitish nation on account of their wickedness and idolatry. Both "Israel" and "Judah" were considerably reduced by judgments previous to the final catastrophe by which they were swept off their land into captivity. And then Hosea v. 3 would seem to indicate that in the tornado of judgment that overwhelmed them at the time of the captivity nine-tenths of the Ten Tribes were to perish. "Thus saith the Lord God; the city that went out by a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel." They were to be deci-

mated. Again, the last verses of Isaiah vi. would seem to imply similar results for the kingdom of Judah. But as we have already seen, Isaiah's prophecies include reference to the Ten Tribes as well as Judah. The passage is certainly rather obscure, but it is suggestive of the captivity judgment. Isaiah asks how long his ministry is to last, and he receives the answer from God, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land" (Isa. vi. 11, 12). The words "the Lord have removed men far away" would seem to refer to the captivity of the Ten Tribes which took place during Isaiah's ministry, the captivity of Judah not taking place till some time after the close of Isaiah's career. Isa. vi. 13 is rather obscure. I have followed here Delitzsch's translation in the main, "And yet in it (*i.e.*, the land of Israel) shall be a tenth, and it shall return and shall be to feed upon like the terebinth and like the oak, in which, when they are felled, there is a root-stock—a holy seed is

its root-stock.” The passage seems to suggest that but a tenth of the people will survive the captivity, and that even that tenth will be subjected to judgment. Thus we see the awful thoroughness of the judgment that the people brought down upon themselves for their total disregard of God’s Ten Commandments. And we can understand the emphasis laid upon the fact that God will not make a full end with His people (see Jeremiah v.). The fact is, He very nearly did. The merest remnant of the people survived to be taken captive. The vast majority of both “Israel” and “Judah” perished by the sword, the pestilence, and the famine. And of the remnant that were taken captive God said that He would watch over and preserve from destruction only the good corn, that is, the God-fearing ones among the captives (Amos. ix. 9). “I will sift the House of Israel among all nations like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.” But the chaff would perish. “All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us” (Amos ix. 10). There

was to be no blessing upon the wicked among the captives of Israel. "Though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good" (Amos. ix. 4). The same things are said with regard to the wicked among the captives of Judah (Ezek. v. 12, 13). "A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them." Again, in Jer. ix. 16 we read: "I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send a sword after them till I have consumed them." And again, in Jer. xvi. 13: "Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew you favour." By the

emblem of the two baskets of figs, the one good, the other very evil, is set forth the good and bad element in the kingdom of Judah (Jer. xxiv.). Only the good figs among the people will God watch over for good and bless and restore to their land. The rest, the evil figs, God "will deliver . . . to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers" (Jer. xxiv. 9, 10). So, then, we have this, that of the remnant who were taken captive of the nation only a portion were God-fearing and regarded God's commandments. These only would be looked upon with favour by God and blessed and prospered. The rest, the wicked remainder, would have a sword sent out after them.

Now, the Scripture records the number of the captives who were taken from the kingdom of Judah. In the 8th year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar took captive 10,000 from

the kingdom of Judah (2 Kings xxiv. 14). Jeremiah tells us of three other batches of captives. In Nebuchadnezzar's 7th year 3,023 were carried captive; in his 18th year 832 were taken, and in his 23rd year 745 (Jer. lii. 28-30). Adding all these figures together, we have as the total number of captives taken from the Kingdom of Judah 14,600. Among these there were a good proportion of "bad figs" who would not be blessed and prospered, but who would have a sword sent after them. The number of captives from the Ten Tribes is not recorded.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

Now the next step in the proof is to take a survey of the state of things that the Book of Esther reveals. The events recorded in the Book of Esther took place as nearly as possible 50 years after the return from captivity under Ezra. And the fact made plain by the Book of Esther is that a very large proportion, much more than half the 14,600, who were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, could not have returned from captivity at all, and, therefore, that by

far the greater part of the 42,360 captives who did return must have belonged to the Ten Tribes. This conclusion is the inevitable conclusion to which the facts shut us up. The people called the Jews were scattered widely, as Esther iii. 6 tells us, "throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus," which extended from India to Ethiopia, and was divided into 127 provinces (Esther i. 1). The Jews were to be found in all the provinces of this mighty empire. Accordingly, when Haman's decree for their destruction was issued, it was sent to *all* the rulers of *all* the provinces of the empire, and it was published to *all* the people. This would not have been necessary in provinces where there were no Jews; the conclusion, therefore, to which we are shut up is that there were Jews in all the 127 provinces of the Persian empire. We see in this fact the beginning of the fulfilment of the threatenings of God against that people, that the wicked members of that race would be scattered throughout all kingdoms of the earth, thus making the amplest allowance for increase in the numbers of that prolific

nation; only a very small proportion of the captives who returned under Ezra could possibly have belonged to the kingdom of Judah, but by far the greater number must have belonged to the Ten Tribes.

Again, the facts revealed in the Book of Esther are capable of, in fact, they necessitate another significant interpretation. For when we come to consider the probable numbers of the people who in Esther are called "Jews" and who are scattered throughout all the provinces of Ahasuerus's great empire, the facts absolutely compel us to form another conclusion, and this is that the people called "the Jews" in Esther *cannot all be survivors of the kingdom of Judah*. The evidence of the Book of Esther forces upon us the conclusion that the survivors of the Ten Tribes are included under the designation "the Jews," as well as the survivors of the Judah kingdom.

The first decree passed by Ahasuerus at the instigation of Haman could not, according to Persian law, be rescinded. The consequence was that when Ahasuerus, on the prayer of Esther, wanted to save the Jews

from destruction, the only way was by establishing a second decree making it lawful for the Jews to defend themselves against their enemies. The Jews were permitted to gather themselves together and to slay in self-defence all who attacked them. Now, the number of men that the Jews thus slew in self-defence was 75,800 (Esther ix. 6, 15, 16). We are told that "all the rulers of the provinces and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king helped the Jews." This would hardly mean more than moral support and encouragement. It seems unlikely that many would actually take up arms and fight for the Jews, considering the general hatred and contempt in which they were held, for this would be civil war. The consequent conclusion that we must draw is that this number, 75,800, were slain by the Jews themselves. The question, then, is how many Jews would be required for the slaughter of such a large number? We can safely say that a much larger number would be required than could be belonging at the time to Judah only. We should have to suppose at least an equal

number of males belonging to the Jews. And when we consider that the old men probably would not fight it would not be far wrong to gather from the number of the Jews' enemies slain that the number of men young and old belonging to the Jews scattered in all the provinces of the Persian empire would be double the number of the enemies slain. We thus arrive at this conclusion, that the male part of the people of the Jews scattered throughout the Persian empire, not counting the women and girls, would amount to 150,000. That this is a moderate estimate of the numbers of the Jews in the time of Esther is indicated by the amount of spoil that Haman hoped to get from this wholesale murder of the people. One may be quite sure that he meant to secure for himself the greater part of the spoil, and that the immense bribe that he was proposing to pay into the king's treasury, namely, 10,000 talents of silver, did not represent what he expected to get for himself.

Now, the number of captives taken from Judah by Nebuchadnezzar was only 14,600. And we are not told whether this number

included women as well as men. If the women were reckoned in the number that would make the case all the stronger against regarding "the Jews" in Esther as descended solely from those taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. But we will suppose for the sake of argument that the 14,600 represents the male part of the captives only. Say that these 14,600 males increased to 40,000 during the 70 years' captivity. This is ample allowance when we consider that God was only going to watch over for good those who were His servants and who kept His Ten Commandments. Of this 40,000, say 15,000 returned with Ezra. The threatened calamity to the Jews in the time of Esther came about 50 years after the return under Ezra. How can 25,000 males possibly increase to so great a figure as 150,000 in 50 years when we recollect this, that they were remaining in captivity in defiance of the will of God? Thus the evidence afforded us by the Book of Esther shuts us up to the conclusion that the whole nation of Israel, the survivors of the Ten Tribes, as well as of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, are called Jews in the days after

the Babylonian captivity. Other obvious considerations support this conclusion. It is certain that the surrounding heathen nations would recognise that the captives of the Ten Tribes and the captives of Judah belonged to the same nation. It is also certain that they would not take much account of inter-tribal jealousies, and, therefore, that they would class them all together and call them by the same name. Furthermore, it would only be a fulfilment of Scripture prophecy for that common name, which the surrounding Gentiles take up, to be the name "Jews." For God had foretold that the Ten Tribes were to be incorporated into Judah and become Jews (Ezek. xxxvii.). And by His overruling providence in causing this name to be used of all the nation of Israel God just brought about a fulfilment of His own word. And there is good reason why, in the providence of God, the surrounding nations should not have made use of the name "Israel" to describe this people, for that name is sacred. like our own Christian names are to-day. Besides, this application of the name "Jew" to the Ten Tribes by the surrounding heathen

may, perhaps, have largely resulted from the circumstances of the return in Ezra's time, for many of the Ten Tribes were seen to throw in their lot with Judah and to return to Jerusalem. In support of this idea that the Ten Tribes are in the Book of Esther called "Jews" is the undeniable fact that they are referred to as such in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. As we have proved above, large numbers of the Ten Tribes returned with Ezra; not merely a few stragglers, but quite sufficient of each Tribe to represent the return of the Tribe as a fact. The captives who had come back under Ezra, the great majority of whom were survivors of the Ten Tribes, are all classed as Jews. The enemies of the Jews classed them all as Jews when writing to the king of Persia about them. Ezra also calls them all "Jews" (see Chapter iv. 23; v. 1, 5; vi. 14), and so does the King of Persia (Ezra vi. 7, 8). Again, the same thing is evident in the Book of Nehemiah; all the returned captives are called "Jews." As, then, the whole nation of Israel are called "Jews" in Ezra and Nehemiah, it is

certain that they would be similarly described also in the Book of Esther.

In considering the Book of Esther another question arises. Did Haman's decree threaten the lives of all the captives who had returned to Jerusalem as well as those scattered in all the provinces of the Persian empire? The answer to this is in the negative, for it would mean a permanent loss of revenue to the king of Persia if one of his subject states was completely wiped out. Another potent reason for saying that the returned captives in Canaan were not threatened by Haman's decree is the fact that there is no reference whatever to them or to Jerusalem in the Book. Again, another reason for saying this is the entire absence of all mention of God or of prayer in the Book. This would certainly not be the case if the returned captives were threatened, because in returning from captivity they were in the line of God's will. Whereas the great lesson of the Book of Esther is that God had a controversy with the Jews, who had refused at His call to return to Jerusalem. Therefore it is that His name is not mentioned in

Esther, a book which deals only with those Jews who had not returned. And the threatened calamity and the marvellous deliverance were the call of God to them to consider their ways and to fall in with the Divine will and purpose for them. In all probability the consciences of many were awakened by these happenings, and they were led to return later in small companies to Jerusalem to give thanks to God for His safe deliverance. Again, there would be some who did not return because they could not; those who, like Nehemiah and Mordecai, were in the service of the king of Persia.

Thus, to sum up the evidence from the Book of Esther, it would appear that those who deny that the term "Jews" in Scripture after the Captivity includes all the Tribes of Israel, are on the horns of a dilemma. If they say that the term "the Jews" in Esther only means those who belonged to the kingdom of Judah, then that proves conclusively that by far the greater number of the 42,360 captives who returned under Ezra could not have belonged to the Jews. Again, if they say that

“the Jews” in Esther is a designation of the whole nation of Israel, the Ten Tribes as well as Judah, Benjamin, and Levi (and this is the conclusion to which the evidence indubitably points), it is equally decisive in settling the question as to where the Ten Tribes are to-day, for we are shut up to the conclusion that “the Jews” of the present day represent the descendants of all the Tribes of Israel. Thus the bubble that the Ten Tribes of Israel were lost after the Captivity is pricked. To come down to times later than the Book of Esther, many Jews, who did not return to live in Palestine, yet were stirred up by the Spirit of God to journey to Jerusalem to join in the feasts. We gather from the New Testament that this had come to be the recognized practice in the time of our Lord and of the Apostles. There was the part of the nation who lived in Palestine, and then there was the part that lived abroad, scattered, we learn from Acts ii., “in every nation under heaven.” These latter were called the Jews of “the dispersion.” This expression occurs in several passages in the New Testament. St.

James writes to them, and his words are only another proof, added to what we have gathered from the Old Testament, that the Ten Tribes of Israel have never been lost. For St. James addresses his Epistle to "the Twelve Tribes of the dispersion." This expression seems to contrast the part of the Twelve Tribes who were of "the dispersion" from the other part, namely, those who had returned and were living in Palestine. St. Peter also, because he is the Apostle of the Circumcision, writes to a smaller portion of them. "To the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappodocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Pet. i. 1, R.V.). The expression also occurs in John vii. 35, where the Jews inquire about Christ, "Will He go unto the dispersion among the Gentiles and teach the Gentiles?" This state of things in the nation of Israel is shown in an incidental but clear manner in Acts ii. There we are told of Jews who have come from all parts of the known world to keep the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem. And Peter, in addressing them, clearly implies that his audience is drawn from all the

Twelve Tribes of Israel. First, in verse 14, he addresses those of the home land: "Ye men of Judah, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem." Then, in verse 22, he speaks to his hearers as "Ye men of Israel"; and winds up finally with an appeal to "the whole house of Israel." It thus comes out incidentally that members of all the Twelve Tribes of Israel were in our Lord's time in the habit of attending the Feasts of Jerusalem. Another fact that is clear from this chapter is that all the Twelve Tribes are called Jews. St. Paul also clearly implies that the whole Twelve Tribes are connected religiously with the Temple at Jerusalem, for he speaks before Agrippa of "Our Twelve Tribes instantly serving God" (Acts xxvi. 7). Therefore, from the New Testament notices of the Twelve Tribes it is unquestionable that there is not the vaguest hint of the continued existence of the division in the nation. This is easily accounted for by the fact that the division has really long ceased to exist, and is inexplicable on any other supposition. The nation of Israel in the New Testament is one;

there is no trace of any division. It may be asked, Why is there not more notice taken of the matter in the New Testament? The answer to this is that there is no need to take much notice of what everybody knows to be a fact. And the scarcity (if we are to use the term) of the evidence in the New Testament does not make it any the less conclusive, for it comes out incidentally and unobtrusively in the manner that facts which are known and acknowledged by everyone naturally do. On this account the evidence of the New Testament should carry more weight. To mention another passage. St. Paul clearly in Rom. iii. refers to the Ten Tribes as Jews, for he divides the whole world into two classes, Jews and Gentiles. God had said with regard to the whole nation of Israel, "This people . . . shall not be reckoned among the nations (or Gentiles)" (Numb. xxiii. 9). The Ten Tribes cannot be classed, therefore, as Gentiles; they must be referred to in Rom. iii. as Jews. This brings the use of the word "Jews" in the New Testament into line with the way it is used in the Books

of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, *i.e.*, for members of all the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Thus the conclusion to which both the Old and New Testament shut us up is that none of the Tribes of Israel have ever been lost, but that the Jews of the present time are the descendants of the Ten Tribes, as well as of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi.

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