

# A JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

CONTAINING

The travels of fourteen Englishmen in 1667 to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, the river Jordan, lake of Sodom and Gomorrah with the antiquities, monuments, and memorable places mentioned in Scripture, by T. B.

To which are prefixed,

Memorable Remarks upon the ancient and modern history of the Jewish nation, as, 1) A description of the holy land, its firmation, fertility, cf. 2) The several captivities of the Jews, after they were possessed thereof; 3) Probable conjectures of what has become of the ten tribes who were carried away captives by the Assyrians, with diverse pertinent relations pursuant thereunto; 4) The state of the Jews since their extermination with the present condition of Palestine.

Together, with a relation of the great council of the Jews in the plains of Hungary in 1650 to examine the Scriptures concerning Christ, by S. B., an Englishman there present.

With an account of the wonderful delusion of the Jews by a false Christ at Smyrna, 1666.

Collected by R. Burton

GLASGOW

Printed by Joseph Galbraith

MDCCLXXXVI

Title page of *A Journey to Jerusalem*, which contains speculations that the American Indians are the ten lost tribes, by Richard Burton (pen-name of Nathaniel Crouch), Glasgow, 1786, Ardmore, Pa., Sigmund Harrison Collection.

### The Ten Lost Tribes

Legend concerning the fate of the ten tribes constituting the northern Kingdom of Israel. The Kingdom of Israel, consisting of the ten tribes (the twelve tribes excluding Judah and Benjamin, who constituted the southern Kingdom of Judah), which fell in 722 B.C., and its inhabitants were exiled to: *"Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."* (2.KIN 17:6 and 18:11). For details and conjectures as to their ultimate fate, see Assyrian Exile, but in general it can be said that they disappeared from the stage of history. However, the parallel passage in 1. Chronicles 5:26 to the effect that the ten tribes were there *"unto this day"* and the prophecies of Isaiah 11:11, Jeremiah 31:8, and above all Ezekiel 37:19-24 kept alive the belief that they had maintained a separate existence and that the time would come when they would be rejoined with their brethren, the descendants of the Exile of Judah to Babylon. Their place in history, however, is substituted by legend, and the legend of the Ten Lost Tribes is one of the most fascinating and persistent in Judaism and beyond it.

The belief in the continued existence of the ten tribes was regarded as an incontrovertible fact during the whole period of the Second Temple and of the Talmud. Tobit, the hero of the apocryphal book of his name, was depicted as a member of the tribe of Naphtali; the Testament of the 12 Patriarchs takes their existence as a fact; and in his fifth vision, IV. Ezra 13:34-45, he saw a "peaceable multitude... these are the ten tribes which were carried away prisoners out of their own land." Josephus, in his Antiquities (Ant. 11:133), states as a fact: "The ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude and not to be estimated in numbers." Paul protests to Agrippa that he is accused: *"...for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope to come..."* (ACTS 26:6-7). While James addresses his epistle to: *"...the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad..."* (JAM 1:1). The only opposing voice to this otherwise universal view is found in the Mishnah. R. Eliezer expresses his view that they will eventually return and "after darkness is fallen upon the ten tribes, light shall thereafter dwell upon them," but R. Akiva expresses his emphatic view that "the ten tribes shall not return again." (Sanh. 10:3). In consonance with this view, though it is agreed that Leviticus 26:38 applies to the ten tribes, R. Meir maintains that it merely refers to their exile. Akiva states that it refers to their complete disappearance (Sifra, Be-Hukkotai 8:1).

Their inability to rejoin with their brethren was attributed to the fact that whereas the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (the Kingdom of Judah) were *"scattered throughout the world,"* the ten tribes were exiled beyond the mysterious river Sambatyon (Gen R. 73:6); with its rolling waters or sand and rocks, which during the six days of the week prevented them from crossing it, and though it rested on the Sabbath, the laws of the Sabbath rendered the crossing equally impossible. According to the Jerusalem Talmud, however (Sanh. 10:6,29c), the exiles were divided into three. Only one-third went beyond the Sambatyon, a second to "Daphne of Antioch" and over the other third "there descended a cloud which covered them"; but all three would eventually return.

Throughout the Middle Ages and until comparatively recent times there were claims of the existence of the ten lost tribes as well as attempts by travellers and explorers, both Jesuits and non-Jesuits, and by many naive scholars, both to discover the ten lost tribes or to identify different peoples with them. In the ninth century, Eldad ha-Dani claimed not only to be a member of the tribe of Dan, but also that he had communicated with four of the tribes. David Reuveni claimed to be the brother of Joseph, the king of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh who were settled in Khaybar in Arabia, which was identified with the Habor of 2. Kings. Benjamin of Tudela gives a long description of the ten tribes. According to him, the Jews of Persia stated that in the town of Nishapur dwelt the four tribes of Dan, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, who were then governed, "by their own prince Joseph Amarkala the Levite {ed. by N. M. Adler (1907), 83}. While the Jews of Khaybar are of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh" (ibid. 72), as was also stated by Reuveni. Persistent was the legend that they warred with Prester John in Ethiopia, a story repeated by Obadiah of Bertinoro in his first two letters from Jerusalem in 1488 and 1489. The kabbalist Abraham Levi the elder, in 1528, identified them with the Falashas. Abraham Farissol gives a long account of them based upon conversations with David Reuveni, which are not to be found in the latter's diary, while the most expansive is that of Abraham Jagel, an Italian Jew of the 16th-17th centuries, in the 22nd chapter of his Beit Ya'ar ha-Levanon.

Jakob Saphir (1822-1888) cherished the hope that he would discover the lost tribes. He tells the story in great detail of Baruch b. Samuel, a Jew of Safed who, sent to seek them, had visited Yemen and after travelling through an uninhabited desert established contact with a

Jew, who claimed to belong to the "sons of Moses." However, Baruch was murdered before he could visit them (Even Saphir, I (1866), 41), and in the following chapter Saphir transcribes word for word the evidence given by a certain Baruch Gad to the rabbis of Jerusalem in 1647 that he had met the "sons of Moses" in Persia, who gave him a letter to take to Jerusalem. He concludes wistfully, "Were I able to give full credence to this letter... I would subject it to a meticulous analysis and would learn from it matters of supreme importance, but the recollection of the fraud of Eldad ha-Dani brings suspicion upon Baruch the Gadite, for one supports the other... I have done my duty by putting the facts down and you may judge for yourselves and I will hear also what contemporary scholars say about it."

Various theories, one more farfetched than the other, have been adduced, on the flimsiest of evidence, to identify different peoples with the ten lost tribes. There is hardly a people, from the Japanese to the British, and from the Red Indians to the Afghans, who have not been suggested, and hardly a place not mentioned among them: Africa, India, China, Persia, Kurdistan, Caucasia, the U.S., and Great Britain. Special interest is attached to the fantastic traveller's tale told by Aaron (Antonio) Levi de Montezinos who, on his return to Amsterdam from South America in 1644, told a remarkable story of having found Indians beyond the mountain passes of the Cordilleras, who greeted him by reciting the Shema. Among those to whom Montezinos gave his affidavit was Manasseh Ben Israel, then rabbi of Amsterdam, who fully accepted the story, and to it devoted his 'Hope of Israel' (1650,1652) which he dedicated to the English Parliament. In section 37 he sums up his findings in the following words:

"1. That the West Indies were anciently inhabited by a part of the ten Tribes, which passed thither out of Tartary, by the Straight of Anian.

2. That the Tribes are not in any one place, but in many; because the Prophets have fore-told their return shall be into their country, out of diverse places. Isaiah especially saith it shall be out of eight.

3. That they did not return to the Second Temple.

4. That at this day they keep the Jewish Religion.

5. That the prophecies concerning their return to their country, are of necessity to be fulfilled.

6. That from all coasts of the world they shall meet in those two places; Assyria and Egypt; God preparing an easier, pleasant way, and abounding with all things, as Isaiah saith (chapter 49), and from thence shall fly to Jerusalem, as birds to their nests.

7. That their Kingdom shall be no more divided; but the twelve Tribes shall be joined together under one Prince, that is under the Messiah, the Son of David; and that they shall never be driven out of their Land."

The Latin work was translated into English the same year it was published, and ran through three editions in as many years, and Manasseh Ben Israel used this "evidence" of the dispersal of the Jews throughout the world as an argument to Oliver Cromwell in his appeal to permit the return of the Jews to England; then the only country which had no Jews. As long as this situation existed, the fulfilment of the prophecy that the coming (or the second coming) of the Messiah would take place only when the Jews were scattered in the four quarters of the world (section 35) could not occur. Both through the translation and the correspondence which the story initiated between Manasseh Ben Israel and theologians in England, it played a significant role in creating the atmosphere which eventually brought about the return of the Jews to England.

## Bibliography

- A. Neubauer, in: 'JQR 1' (1889), p.14-28,95-114,185-201,408-23;
- A. Hyamson, *ibid*, 15 (1903), p.640-76;
- C. Roth, 'A Life of Manasseh Ben Israel' (1934), p.178-93;
- A. H. Godbey, 'The Lost Tribes, a Myth' (1930);
- L. Wolf, 'Manasseh Ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell' (1901), p.17-56;
- D. Tamar, in: 'Sefunot' (1962), p.303-310.

\*\*\*\*\*

CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES INTERNATIONAL, P.O. BOX 888, COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450, AUSTRALIA