

# How Old Is This Anglo-Saxon Truth?

## Strange Error of the Learned about this Matter

The other day I saw the strange statement that Richard Brothers was the original proclaimer of the truth that the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic and kindred peoples are the Covenant People of the Bible.

I had known of poor Richard Brothers, as everyone has who studies the various phases of religious fanaticism, but it was something of a surprise to find in a new book concerning him a claim for his precedence in the proclamation of Anglo-Saxon-Israel truth. He was a naval officer who lived from 1757 to 1824. He dabbled in the prophecies and became insane. He declared himself to be "the nephew of the Almighty" and "a prince of the Hebrews" destined to lead the Jews back to Canaan. He had the dates of this return to Canaan very elaborately but also erroneously worked out. He was imprisoned as a criminal lunatic because of his habit of startling the inhabitants of London with prophecies of the death of the king or the destruction of the city.

Even the *Encyclopedia Britannica* makes the astounding statement that "the supporters of the Anglo-Israelite theory claim him as the first writer on their side." This is my first knowledge that such a claim has ever been made and I think the *Britannica* staff will find themselves unable to prove it. In its article on "Anglo-Israel" the *Britannica* estimates the believers in this truth as numbering 2,000,000, but says again that Richard Brothers may be regarded as its first apostle.

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* also falls into the same error.

Now, we could say that Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah and Jeremiah were the earliest apostles of this truth, that the Apostle Paul was one of its keenest thinkers, and that the place of its origin was Palestine instead of, England, if this did not seem like begging the question. However, it is a simple task to show that the *Encyclopedia* is chronologically incorrect and therefore wrong in its conclusions.

Dating from the year A.D. 665 to the year 1634, over one hundred and fifty references to the identity of the Anglo-Saxon people with ancient Israel, have been discovered. They were all reprinted in the *British Israelite* for 1879-80. It is noteworthy that none of the writers during that thousand years adopted the name of Jacob or Judah, but that of Israel, for the Anglo-Saxon people.

"The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles," part of which in its present form we know dates from A.D. 892, and which preserves the great common stock of the mouth-to-ear banded-down history of our people, is almost a continuation of the Bible

in its method and tone, and much of its information runs parallel with that which confirms Anglo-Saxon-Israel truth as held today.

In 1530 Tyndale announced his amazing discovery of the likeness between the Hebrew and the English language which made the English the most suitable of any language into which to translate the Bible.

In 1586, John Lily, in his *Euphues and His England*, gives evidence of his knowledge and agreement with this truth. In 1590, Counsellor Le Lover, a French Magistrate, wrote a book on "The Ten Lost Tribes," which he says came to England.

In 1649, Dr. John Sadler declared our Israelitish origin. In 1666, John Bunyan in the pain of his spiritual conflicts, happened on this truth, saw how great a way it opened for his distraught spirit, but was driven off by his father's denial. In 1672, -the great work, *The Court of the Gentiles*, which anticipated modern scientific discovery in showing the Hebrew sources of knowledge which had been attributed to other nations, made an indirect contribution to men's knowledge of our truth.

But even while all this was transpiring, the Puritans in England, in their quiet and Providential incubation for their great American enterprise, were feeding on the likeness between themselves and Israel. They called themselves "The seed of Abraham, God's servant, and the children of Jacob, His chosen." It is so written in their records.

The Fifth Monarchy men had more than a glimmer of the truth. They saw the succession of empires, with the Anglo-Saxon people the last and greatest because "cut out of a mountain without hands."

In 1723, Dean Abbadie, of Kilaloe, Ireland, wrote this: "Unless the ten tribes of Israel are flown into the air; or sunk into the earth; they must be those ten Gothic tribes that entered Europe in the fifth century, overthrew the Roman Empire and founded the ten nations of modern Europe." (Of course, we do not subscribe to all the statements made by those early writers. We only claim that *the idea of extant and continuing Israel as known peoples*, has always been held.)

All of these testimonies antedate the period of poor Richard Brothers. It is not surprising that he, earnest student of the scriptures that he was, saw the truth also; the mystery is that students more sane than he can miss it.

Another work on the subject appeared in 1795. I. H. Frere wrote on the subject in 1796. Ralph Wedgwood in 1814. Rev. B. Murphy, in 1817, wrote *Proofs that Israelites Came From Egypt Into Ireland*. In 1820, Prebendary Waddiloe supported the general contention.

Modern interest on a large scale may be said to have begun with John Wilson, who was born in Kilmarnock, Scotland, in 1779. He was a Presbyterian minister, educated at Glasgow University. His attention was called to the subject

indirectly by his mother's repeated suggestion that he pay a good measure of attention to the 49th chapter of Genesis. Wilson did not see the point, but his mother insisted that he keep that chapter in mind. Now, what does that signify? Simply this, that aside from books and authors, this truth has always been the possession of the plain people of Ireland and Scotland. They had no need of books upon it. It was part of their natural Bible heritage. But as the new education came, they found the need, as Wilson's mother found it, to point the younger generation more specifically to the Bible sources of this truth. By degrees, Wilson came to see the point at issue. He read for a long time in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, that mine of ancient Israel lore, and succeeded there in tracing the Anglo-Saxon people as far back as Media. The rest was easy.

Since his day a distinguished company of authors have explored every nook and cranny of Bible truth concerning this people, bringing out of the Scriptures treasures both old and new.

We are glad poor Richard Brothers had at least this glint of light before he fell upon his mental darkness. But to record him as the first apostle of this truth even in England is just about 1100 years out of the way.

These notes are by no means a complete history of the rise of this truth to public acceptance. That history has not yet been written. And it should be. —W. J. C.

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