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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

# BRITISH-ISRAEL:

# RACIAL IDENTITY IN IMPERIAL BRITAIN, 1870-1920

VOLUME I

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JANUARY 1997

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

While the work of writing a dissertation is, by and large, a solitary venture, such a task could never have been completed without the help of many other persons. Over the past three years I have incurred debts to many people, and I offer thanks to all of them. I am greatly indebted to my committee, Dr. Jo N. Hays, Dr. Robert O. Bucholz, and Dr. David Dennis, for their support, time, and guidance, as well as for their insights into the subject and their suggestions as to how to make sense of it all. I would also like to thank the staff at the Elizabeth M. Cudahy Memorial Library of Loyola University, especially those in the interlibrary loan department without whom my research would have taken much longer and would have been far more daunting. The librarians at the British Library, the Royal Society of London, Sion College, and the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh, were also extremely helpful and I owe them much. Without the financial support from Loyola in the forms of research travel grants and a Dissertation Fellowship I am certain that the completion of my work would have been long delayed. Finally, my greatest debt I owe to the people in my life, my family and friends, for their patience and understanding and especially to Lynn for all she has given me over the years. It is to her that I dedicate this work.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the last decades of the nineteenth century the British came to perceive themselves, with ample reason, as commanding the summit of world power and prestige. Their nation had amassed great wealth, their people seemed to be reproducing at unprecedented and unmatched rates in the Western world, and, most notably, their capital city was the center of an empire unlike any the world had ever known. Such a remarkable expansion of wealth and power necessitated not so much justification as explanation. The complex economic and political entity that was the British Empire became the focus of countless surveys and examinations, each offering a solution to its existence. But whatever the true source of British imperial expansion, whether it be economic interests, political structures, or social impulses, the most common reason given for the rise and prosperity of Greater Britain was the inherent racial character of its people. These people, the Anglo-Saxon race, possessed all the traits necessary for successful colonization and imperial rule. Great Britain, a relatively small group of islands in the North Atlantic, was home to a race destined, it seemed, to attain and to hold the dominant position on the planet. In light of this fact, or rather assumption, came a renewed interest in the origin or, in the words of one contemporary, "the genesis of the Anglo-Saxon race."[1] In the origin of the race lay the secret of the empire, while in the strength of the blood rested its future.

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[1]H. L. Chamberlain, "The Genesis of the Saxon Race," *Overland Monthly* 43 (January 1904): 70.

As the empire grew it exerted an increasing influence over the way in which the 'Anglo-Saxon' peoples, both at home and abroad, viewed themselves. That they were an 'imperial race' certainly could not be doubted; defining exactly who they were and where they came from, however, became critically important. If the race could be found to be 'imperially predestined' from its origin, either because of its racial characteristics, its endowment of Providential favor, or both, then the empire assumed a much higher, indeed almost unassailable, legitimacy.[2] In this way, the existence of the empire fundamentally effected the search for and definition of British origins and identity.

This is not a study of the growth of the British Empire per se, as it will neither detail the expansion of British influence nor attempt to discover its underlying reasons or consequences.[3] It is, rather, an examination of one way in which the imperial experience shaped the way the British viewed themselves. It will assess British racial identity during the decades around the turn of the century, especially as that identity resulted from the images and reality of imperial expansion. Specifically under consideration will be the British-Israel movement, since it represented not only the apotheosis of this type of identity but also fully reflected much imperial discourse otherwise considered 'mainstream.' The proponents of the British-Israel theory, or British-Israelism, contended that the An-

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[2]The relationship between national identity and the feeling of divine election has been explored to some degree in William R. Hutchinson and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994). See specifically A. F. Walls, "Carrying the White Man's Burden: Some British Views of National Vocation in the Imperial Era," chap in, ibid., 29-50.

[3]For a solid and convincing survey of the motives and course of British expansion see P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, vol. 1, *Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914*, vol. 2, *Crisis and Deconstruction 1914-1990* (London: Longman, 1993).

glo-Saxon race's predominating position on the planet was explained fully (and was otherwise inexplicable) as the fulfillment of a promise. God had promised Abraham and his descendants that they would inherit the earth and come into a place among nations that the British now indisputably occupied. To doubt the validity of this covenant was to doubt the faithfulness of God. The Anglo-Saxon race was the recipient of the Abrahamic promises, therefore, not because it had somehow deposed the Hebrews of their rightful inheritance but in that it had descended from the chosen people, the children of Israel. God's covenant blessings had not been transferred, British-Israelites confidently proclaimed, but rather had simply remained unfulfilled until the present day. In the forbears of the Anglo-Saxon, the Hebrews of the Kingdom of Israel, the explanation for empire was found. Being racial Israelites Anglo-Saxons could claim to be the rightful inheritors of the earth. The origins of the race, as set forth by this movement, both defined the people and explained the empire. As the nineteenth century drew to a close and British dominance seemed increasingly permanent,[4] the quest for origins, particularly racial origins, became a powerful dynamic in the formation of British identity. It is this dynamic that is under investigation here.

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[4]Faith in the continued dominance of the British Empire, despite numerous signs to the contrary, is explored in Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), esp. xi-xiii, 137-41. While Hutchins concentrates on the idea of a permanent Raj in India, this 'illusion of permanence' also applied to Greater Britain as a whole. The Boer War seemed to incite a resurgence of imperial feeling and the boundless potential of the empire. See "Leading Article--South Africa and the Empire," *Times* (London) 1 May 1902. Numerous statesmen, however, were coming to understand that the position and future of the British empire was not so stable. See, Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

Historical assessments of British national identity have tended to focus upon the internal cultural aspects of a nation, such as religious confessionalization, literature, language, and art as the prime movers in the identity-formation process.[5] Certainly a nation's internal culture is instrumental in any sense of self which that nation develops. A people's external activities, however, including expansion, have begun to be examined as potent factors in the ways in which the people of any nation come to view themselves. At the forefront of this investigation have been those scholars, particularly literary theorists, who attempt to bridge the gap between 'internally' and 'externally' generated identity by studying the interaction between a nation's culture and its imperial thought and activity.[6] While such studies have been helpful, they tend to base their conclusions more on theory

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[5]See for example: Mary J. Hickman, ed., *Religion, Class and Identity: The Irish in Britain* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1995); Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: University Press, 1994); Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Keith Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993); Jonathan Re, "Internationality: Britain and the Idea of National Identity," *Culture and History* 9-10 (1991): 137-59; David Lowenthal, "British National Identity and the English Landscape," *Rural History* 2 (1991): 205-230; J. A. Mangan, ed., *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700-1914* (London: F. Cass, 1988). Sporting culture, in fact, has helped introduce the imperial experience into national identity studies as British sport was exported around the world. See Brian Stoddart, "Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1988): 649-673; J. A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (New York: Viking, 1986).

[6]The seminal work of this type is Edward Said's classic, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978). A number of works have since appeared, this list being only a representative few: Robert H. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994); Robin Cohen, *Frontiers of Identity: The British and the Others* (London: Longman, 1994); M. Gidley, ed., *Representing Others: White Views of Indigenous Peoples* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992); Ruth H. Lindeborg, "The 'Asiatic' and the Boundaries of Victorian Englishness," *Victorian Studies* 37 (Spring 1994): 381-404.

than on the realities and complexities of the historical record.[7] The most widely employed analytical tool of late in the study of identity building, both in terms of internal culture and international contact, has been the concept of "the Other."[8] The use of the Other in identity formation takes place by contrasting one's self (almost always favorably) against a particular group, either a nation, race, class, or gender. The Other is usually considered abnormal and almost always threatening to those who have defined it. Once the Other is established, defining one's identity is made that much easier, as it involves primarily discovering only how one differs from it, and that much more palatable, since it assumes a superiority, or at least normalcy, on one's own part. The idea of Otherness can be a quite powerful and valuable method of interpretation. When used in cases of strict binary opposition it offers many insights that are otherwise almost completely out of reach. It most ably explains the process of identity building in terms of reaction especially in response to a real or perceived threat, an undeniably potent impulse for identity construction.[9] Even at its most effective, however, the use of the Other can only answer

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[7]For questions as to the usefulness of Said's and his followers' theorizations to the discipline of imperial history see, John M. MacKenzie, "Edward Said and the Historians," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* (1994): 9-25.

[8]See Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: The 'Jewish Question' and English National Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Anitas Levy, *Other Women: The Writing of Class, Race, and Gender, 1832-1898* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Rustom Bharucha, "Somebody's Other: Disorientations in the Cultural Politics of Our Times," *Third Text* 26 (Spring 1994): 3-10; H. L. Malchow, "Frankenstein's Monster and Images of Race in Nineteenth Century Britain," *Past & Present* 139 (May 1993): 90-130.

[9]The ideas of binary opposition and vulnerability are best seen, and thus the use of the Other is most effective, in Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

half of the central question involved in identity studies, that of "Who are we?" The construction of an identity based upon Otherness, in fact, by focusing upon those who are foreign or different most clearly explains who we are not. It leaves the more positive side of the question to be pieced together from the remaining traits and characteristics that emerge in opposition to those defining the Other. By setting up a strict dichotomy of ideas such as 'cleanliness' vs. 'dirtiness,' 'industriousness' vs. 'laziness,' 'civilized' vs. 'savage,' 'strength' vs. 'weakness,' among many, those who create an identity for themselves in this way have the luxury of picking and choosing from among the best. But this ability only extends so far in that it depends fully on the existence of a clearly defined Other and is limited by the parameters of its characteristics as set forth in the process. Moreover, it is at its core a negative mode of thinking, it sets up comparative definitions, usually in the midst of a sense of vulnerability, thus not ever fully answering the central question or providing a solid and constructive identity for a people.

There are significant difficulties as well in trying to understand the identity fostered by Britain's imperial experience as a function of the Other.[10] Scholars have asserted that the empire both encouraged and responded to this process of "Othering." It was the dispensing of Otherness upon the indigenous peoples which, they claim, provided the "rationale for conquest."[11] Again the focus seems to rest on the *foreign* as the source of

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[10]For an assessment and critique of the use of the Other in imperial historiography see Elazar Barkan, "Post-Anti-Colonial Histories: Representing the Other in Imperial Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 33 (April 1994): 180-203.

[11]Seamus Deane, introduction to *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* by Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward Said (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 12.

self-understanding. The concept of the Other is at least as limiting here as it is elsewhere. It depended not only on the existence of an Other but, because the empire involved encountering a myriad of different peoples, on the selection of specific Others to contrast oneself against at any given time. Strict binary opposition was difficult in this situation since no one nation or race was the prime and continual focus of imperial concern.[12] Consequently, the identity that seems to result from the use of the Other is often ambiguous. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism*, often considered to be a sequel to his groundbreaking *Orientalism*, reinforces his contention that the process of Othering was primarily a response of "the West" in its imperialistic encounters with the Near and Far East.[13] For Said, the creation of stereo-typed Others was a defensive response that distanced and protected the Western world from an exotic and therefore dangerous Orient.[14] What this assumes, however, is not only a static but also a homogenous Western world; the dichotomy emerging as West against East (or, more accurately, a Western conception of the East). Yet this homogenization of 'the West' does not fully bear up under close examination of the historical record, especially the British experience. Familiarity with late-nineteenth century British imperial writings, whether with books, newspaper accounts, or journal articles, shows unquestionably that the British were not content to be

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[12]The importance of binary opposition is explained in MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, 39-43. Unfortunately, MacDonald does not convincingly show that the imperial experience involved primarily binary relationships.

[13]Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, New York: Knopf, 1993).

[14]Idem, *Musical Elaborations* (London, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 52.

lumped together as part of an amorphous 'West' or even to be seen simply as 'White Men.' True, given the choice between associating themselves with 'Western' or 'Oriental' culture, most Britons would likely consider themselves to be part of the Western world. This, however, is a false choice. At every opportunity the British sought to distinguish themselves from other 'Western' peoples in terms of their race, capacities, and successes, claiming close affinity only to those who could be considered also of Anglo-Saxon origin. If we attempt to interpose the use of the Other into this situation, the result is an "Anglo-Saxon world" othering itself against not only the exotic races it encountered in its imperial expansion but also nearly all of its European rivals. Yet to other one's self against the entire world, both Western and non-Western, is to condemn the idea of the Other to meaninglessness and confusion. If all that can be said of your people is that they are not what all others are, then the basic question as to the race's identity has been left largely unanswered. The solution to identity formation during the imperial period, it seems, requires a more straightforward approach.

This approach, I believe, can be found by examining the role that the search for racial origins played in the creation of this imperial identity. "The sense of 'whence we came'," as Anthony Smith points out, "is central to the definition of 'who we are'."[15] Though within this search the Othering process is never fully eliminated (nor should it be), it is transformed. The formula is no longer "by not being Others we define ourselves,"[16] instead it becomes 'by discovering from whom and where we came, we must

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[15]Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 22.

[16]Barkan, "Post-Anti-Colonial Histories," 180.

necessarily exclude those who do not share our ancestry;' the focus remains here, importantly, on ourselves. Once it were convincingly shown that imperial success had been the direct product of the race's unique ancestry, then Others by extension were inherently either less able to perform the tasks of empire or incapable of ruling themselves. For the British to explain how their empire had been created, however, it was simply insufficient to remark on the differences or deficiencies of either the colonized peoples or European competitors. The British had to ascribe to themselves traits of character which had made the empire possible and, not too far down the line, demonstrate from whence they had derived these remarkable qualities. It was not enough to assert or assume supremacy, this supremacy had to be given a worthy pedigree. In defining themselves, particularly in the light of their imperial successes, the British looked less to those across the seas and more to their ancestors back beyond the gap of centuries. In the establishment of racial origins and hence an imperial identity, the process of Othering performed primarily a secondary role. Imperial Anglo-Saxonism and even more so British-Israelism were not interested so much in trying to show what other nations and peoples were or were not, but in finding an explanation for their prominence based in the racial research and assumptions of the time.

This dissertation argues that origins, particularly racial origins, rather than the process of Othering played the paramount role in the creation of a British imperial identity. The idea that the British were an imperial people with all the concomitant traits of character deemed necessary to both undertake the building of the empire and uphold its responsibilities found its strongest substantiation in the detailing of the race's descent. The ascription of imperial qualities to racial inheritance afforded the security of inimitability and

immutability. Both the 'mainstream' interpretation of this evolution, known as imperial Anglo-Saxonism, and the focus of this dissertation, British-Israelism, depended upon the discovery of specific racial forebears to explain the position of the modern British people. It is because of this that British-Israelism is a worthy subject for historical investigation. In and of itself it is, to say the least, curious. As a clearly defined and easily accessible representative of the larger process of identity construction through the invocation of racial origins, however, British-Israelism offers valuable insights. Though certainly unorthodox in its specifics, the theory nevertheless has many elements in common with a much wider mentality. Even those critics who described the belief as only a foolish craze were also obliged to admit that it "has yet no little importance as a sentiment."[17] As the twentieth century approached, the theory received increased respect. This was less because it had found new and indisputable evidence for its claims than because popular interest in Anglo-Saxon origins, spurred on by imperial pride, experienced a new vigor. The identification of the Anglo-Saxon race with the lost tribes of Israel, a New York paper explained in 1891, had "at last, passed its probationary stage, and it is now high time to call a truce to mere ridicule, and to admit the hearing into the sober atmosphere of calm and deliberate investigation." The arguments advanced in its favor deserved careful consideration, the paper noted, since they touched upon a subject of the highest importance. "The question of the real origin of the Anglo-Saxons," it continued,

> who constitute a race indubitably destined to dominate in future ages, merits the most earnest and searching study from the best and ablest truth-seekers of our day. . . . The very possibility that we have sprung from an arcadia so lofty [as that of Israel], and which is so strenuously maintained by all who seem to have given this

[17]"Anglo-Israelism," *Westminster Gazette* (Westminster), 22 November 1893.

> subject any study worthy of the name, adds a zest and a solemnity to it which but reacts upon all who have no other condemnation to advance except their own *ipse dixits*.[18]

The issue here becomes clearer if we paraphrase what Elazar Barkan has identified as a critical question in the understanding of imperial actions and attitudes. British-Israelism's importance is enhanced when we look "to investigate how rational, sensible people, not exceptionally pathological" could believe in such a hypothesis.[19] The answer to this, I believe, is that, given the attitudes and conclusions of the age, British-Israelism was as acceptable a solution to the "Anglo-Saxon Riddle" as any other.[20] All of them, however disparate from each other, had essentially the same goal in mind: to discover a British racial ancestry and identity that could convincingly explain their imperial successes and confer a sense of future security and numinous destiny. It was upon this foundation that the British came to understand themselves and their global role in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

The search for and establishment of racial origins as the basis for national identity is, obviously, no merely modern endeavor. Endowing one's own race with a glorious or even divine origin was a practice well known to classical writers, as evidenced by Virgil's epic poem *The Aeneid.* In Britain, a similar process had begun by the early Middle

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[18]"The Anglo-Saxon Riddle," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (New York), 7 February 1891.

[19]Barkan, "Post-Anti-Colonial Histories," 192.

[20]Rev. William Henry Burr, *The Anglo-Saxon Riddle, Or, The Riddle of Our Origin, Present Grandeur, and Future Greatness* (London: W. H. Guest, 1873), 2-3.

Ages.[21] Oral traditions and the quasi-historical accounts of Britain by scribes like Gildas (c. 550) and Nennius (c. 900) fed an increasingly fantastic myth of the origins of the British people, culminating in Geoffrey of Monmouth's highly influential *History of the Kings of Britain* which appeared about 1136. Geoffrey's *History* developed, and thus legitimated, the story of the settlement of Britain by the Trojan hero Brutus and his followers. Brutus, being the grandson of Aeneas, supplied Britain with racial connections to the civilizations of both ancient Troy and imperial Rome. This high pedigree bequeathed unto the British "a glorious heroic past, on a par with that of the classical people."[22] In the same vein in which British-Israelism lay more than seven centuries later, Geoffrey's *History* helped to legitimate Britain's place and power. Scholars have noted that the intention of this work was less a chronicling of monarchs than the providing of license for an anticipated British empire.[23] Geoffrey's heroes, not only Brutus but Constantine the Great of Rome (son of Helena, a British woman) and King Arthur, presented "a coherent texture of historical claims" to imperial greatness and were used as such by later mon-

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[21]For a good general description of this process and the influence of Geoffrey's work see Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1982), chap. 1.

[22]Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 14.

[23]This interpretation was first put forth by Sebastian Evans in the "Epilogue" to his classic translation of the *History*. See Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Histories of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Sebastian Evans, LL.D. (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1904), 359. It is considered by and incorporated into A. E. Parsons "The Trojan Legend in England: Some Instances of Its Application to the Politics of the Times," *Modern Language Review* 24 (July 1929): 258.

archs, including Henry VIII in his struggle against the power of Rome.[24] Later, John Dee, Elizabeth I's astrologer, strongly advocated the expansion of England's overseas possessions on the basis of the Queen's descent from Brutus and Arthur.[25] Also presaging the British-Israel theory was Geoffrey's emphasis upon the idea of racial triumph. Well aware of an older similar myth of the Trojan origin of France, Geoffrey could in this way link the Normans of the Conquest to the ancient Britons through a common ancestry. "The arrival of the Normans on the shores of Britain in 1066," Michael Curley notes, "could be interpreted as a rejoining of peoples connected by race and history but separated by the Saxon incursions."[26] In the end, the race of Brutus achieved victory and dominance in the Isles and thus gave a racial legitimization for the Norman Conquest and, more broadly, for British imperial power.[27] The *History* and its subsequent adaptations

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[24]Richard Koebner, "'The Imperial Crown of this Realm': Henry VIII, Constantine the Great, and Polydore Vergil," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 26 (May 1953): 41.

[25]Frances A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London: Routeledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 85. Yates suggests that the idea of Arthurian descent found in Dee's writings and even in Spenser's *The Faerie Queen*, contributed to a "kind of 'British Israel' mystique" which could easily take hold in Elizabethan England where there existed a "highly charged atmosphere" of sacred destiny and religious mission. Ibid., 103.

[26]Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, 15. British-Israelites also interpreted the Norman invasion as a reunion, in this case the Normans represented the tribe of Benjamin joining its Hebrew brothers in the British Isles.

[27]The nineteenth-century Briton faced a similar conundrum regarding the Norman Conquest. The idea of a French people successfully conquering the Saxon kingdom did not fit well with the image Victorians were crafting of themselves and their racial origin. The process of diluting the conquest (including a similar attempt to racially homogenize the Normans with the Saxons) has been examined to some degree in Clare A. Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

and incorporations became, therefore, "the foundation of a great historical myth which supported racial and dynastic aspirations for over five hundred years."[28] The ancestry of the race provided the most solid clues to its identity and its most powerful claim to greatness.

In the nineteenth century the search for racial identity experienced a renewed impetus. Modern racial science and late-century imperial expansion greatly contributed to and shaped its formation. By this time the myth of Trojan descent had long been discredited and relegated to a place among the curios of history. Its underlying impulse, however, remained very much intact. The creation of an identity, one that explained and validated the dominating position that Britain occupied in the world, was greatly influenced by the racial concepts of the age though it continued to emphasize the importance of origins. In 1889 the African explorer and author Paul Du Chaillu published his meticulously researched and highly controversial two-volume work, *The Viking Age*.[29] Inspired by the circumstances described above, i.e. British expansion and hegemony, Du Chaillu sought their explanation within the progenitors of the race that had accomplished them. "While studying the progress made in the colonisation of different parts of the world made by European nations," Du Chaillu explained,

> I have often asked myself the following questions:--How is it that over every region of the globe the spread of the English-speaking people and of their language far ex-

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[28]MacDougall, *Racial Myth*, 12.

[29]Du Chaillu's work was met with controversy not because of its assumptions concerning the racial foundation of empire but because of its specific conclusions concerning the race itself. Du Chaillu suggested that there were no such things as "Angles" or "Saxons" as commonly understood, but that these were simply names misapplied to various Viking invaders of Britain.

> ceeds that of all other European nations combined? Why is it that, wherever the English-speaking people have settled, or are this day found, even in small numbers, they are more energetic, daring, adventurous, and prosperous, and understand the art of self-government and of ruling alien peoples far better than other colonising nations? Whence do the English-speaking communities derive the remarkable energy they possess . . . [and] what are the causes which have made the English such a pre-eminently seafaring people? for without such a characteristic they could not have been the founders of so many states and colonies speaking the English tongue![30]

Discounting the primacy (though not importance) of factors such as historical circumstances and geographical advantages, Du Chaillu focused instead upon the "numerous warlike and ocean-loving tribes of the North, the ancestors of the English-speaking people" as the source of Britain's greatness. In the modern British race or, as he calls it, the English-speaking people, could be found "to this day many of the same traits of character which those old Northmen possessed."[31] British expansion was the inevitable outcome of the instincts of this race that had colonized the isles of Britain so many centuries before. The present British colonies would some day soon, Du Chaillu predicted, join their mother country and "look with pride to the progenitors of their race in the glorious and never-to-be-forgotten countries of the North, the birthplace of a new epoch in the history of mankind."[32] Even Du Chaillu recognized that his work lay very much within the tradition represented by Geoffrey of Monmouth and the like. Invoking the names of Gildas, Bede, and Nennius, he sought to distance himself only from the substance and not the un-

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[30]Paul B. Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age: The Early History, Manners, and Customs of the Ancestors of the English-speaking Nations* (London: John Murray, 1889), 1: vii-viii.

[31]Ibid., 1: viii.

[32]Ibid.

derlying purpose of their work. "We are well aware that the people of every country like to trace their origin or history as far back as possible, and that legends often form part of the fabric of these histories," Du Chaillu assured his readers, but "the description of the settlement must be founded on facts which can bear the test of searching criticism if they are to believed and adopted;" these he claimed to conclusively present.[33] In the end, modern history and science changed only the methods and the conclusions of this quest for origins, not the importance or impulse behind the search itself.

Concurrent with Du Chaillu's investigations, and in response to similar questions regarding the British race, arose the British-Israel theory. In its most widely accepted form, British-Israelism contended that the modern British race, including the populations of the so-called Anglo-Saxon colonies and the United States, were the direct descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel.[34] According to a strictly literal interpretation of the Old and New Testaments, the tribes of Israel, missing since their captivity in the eighth century BC, were to emerge from their Divinely-imposed obscurity onto the world scene and take their place as the dominant people in the world. Maintaining this literal reading, the promises to Israel were to exist ad infinitum; they could not be co-opted by or transposed upon any other people. That Britain now possessed these blessings meant that its people must be of the race unto whom they were promised: the Hebrews of the Kingdom of Israel. Despite these seemingly ludicrous claims, British-Israelism found a large number of

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[33]Ibid., 1: 25.

[34]A less widespread, though important, variation of the theory was that the entire Northern European population had descended from the Ten Tribes.

adherents, some estimates placing the total at two million by the turn of the century.[35] Apart from sheer numbers, the movement attracted the belief and support of numerous clergy of the Established Church of England, including several bishops, also that of government officials, scholars, respected scientists, top military officers, aristocracy, and Royalty. It cut across gender, sectarian, cultural, and class lines by appealing to the idea of a glorious racial heritage of the British people as a whole. Recognizing all this removes British-Israelism from its rather peripheral position as a minor religious opinion and places it squarely within the mainstream attempt to explain Britain's hegemony through the exploration of its racial identity. The two existing investigations of the theory, dissertations by John Wilson and Richard Virr, interpret it primarily as a religious movement with racial and imperial undertones.[36] It seems more accurate to say that British-Israelism was, instead, fundamentally a racial and imperial movement set within the language and parameters of religious concepts. Though its founders and active proponents were deeply religious people, its wide appeal stemmed mostly from the racial identity and imperial pride found at the base of its teachings.

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[35]*The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1901 ed., s.v. "Anglo-Israelism" by Joseph Jacobs, B.A.; and, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, 1908, s.v. "Anglo-Israelism," by Albert Hyamson. As late as 1929 the *Encyclopædia Britannica* reported that the belief was "still held by over 2,000,000 people." 14th ed., s.v. "Anglo-Israelite Theory."

[36]John Wilson, "The History and Organization of British Israelism" (D.Phil., Oxford University, 1966); Richard Edmund Virr, "British Israel: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Millennialism" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 1980). The only other detailed discussions of British-Israelism are to be found in dictionaries and encyclopedias of religious movements and more general reference works.

When viewed fully within this racial-imperial context, British-Israelism offers hitherto unavailable insights into identity formation in Great Britain during the final decades of the nineteenth century. The study of racially-based, ultra-nationalist, and expansionist political and social dogmas of this time has been limited for the most part to the Continental powers, particularly to Germany. The Nazi experience naturally explains much of this attention. In looking for predecessors to egregious Nazi beliefs and programs, scholars have explored late-nineteenth century racial concepts and rhetoric.[37] Ideas such as those of Houston Stewart Chamberlain (a Briton by birth and German by choice) are highlighted as presaging those of Hitler and the Nazis. Britain's experience with this type of ideology has generally been studied only within the narrow confines of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. A study of British-Israelism, however, may help correct this partial myopia. The British-Israel movement, let it not be misunderstood, does not represent a strict British parallel to Nazism. It was motivated neither by hate nor anger but by self-conceit and a sense of wonder. Nurtured within a wider mid-Victorian chauvinism, British-Israelism came to reflect much of its general tenor. As Bernard Porter points out, mid-century British nationalism, based as it was in an extremely accentuated self-confidence, was often more condescending and patronizing than vicious or nasty.[38] So it was with British-Israelism. Nevertheless, the theory existed within and helped to form a wider European mentality of nationalism, race-consciousness, expansion, and

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[37]The classic study of this dynamic is Fritz Stern's *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (New York: Anchor Books, 1961).

[38]Bernard Porter, "The Victorians and Europe," *History Today* 42 (January 1992): 16-22.

world domination that informed German and other Continental writers and thinkers. Though clearly distinct from Nazism, the British-Israel theory nourished itself on many of the same attitudes that fed the National Socialists of Germany.[39] Both looked to a mytho-historical origin of the race (the Aryans and the Israelites), for example, to explain and chart the nation's destiny and to create a sense of racial identity. Ultimately, perhaps, the rise of British-Israelism teaches that extreme nationalism, racial pride, and imperial designs have manifested themselves in ways highly divergent from modern fascism. The truth is that 'the Identity' (as it was called) never developed into a Nazi-type ideology in Britain, though this may have more to do with the nature of the wider British chauvinism described above than to anything within the ideology itself. The American offspring of the movement, known as Christian Identity, did mutate to such an extent that in the end it mirrored much Nazi ideology including anti-Semitism and Aryan supremacy.[40] In Great

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[39]Jonathan Meades has commented that Nazi Germany "combined the two most pernicious human traits--the religious and the nationalistic." Without conceding his point regarding the pernicious nature of these human aspects, it is clear that British-Israelism did very much the same thing. The French writer Max O'Rell commented that the belief was indicative of the "pitch stupidity can be carried, when national vanity and religious mania have a hand in the matter." Meades, "The Devil's Work," *The Times Magazine* (London) 29 October 1994; O'Rell, *John Bull and His Island* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884), 231.

[40]Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right : The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994). This group's activities have tended towards the violence espoused by much Nazi propaganda, including being indirectly connected to the April 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City. The leading suspects behind the bombing have been linked to right-wing militia movements, and these, in turn, to white supremacist organizations. The British-Israel roots of these organizations have received some recent media attention. See, for example, Gayle White, "Identity Theology's Militants Stress Fighting," *Atlanta Journal Constitution* 29 April 1995, sec. A, p. 3; Gustav Niebuhr "A Vision of An Apocalypse: The Religion of the Far Right," *New York Times* 22 May 1995, sec. A, p. 8; Laurie Goodstein, "In Christian Identity, Whites are Chosen," *Washington Post*, reprinted in *The Herald* (Everett, WA)

Britain, however, the movement remained much closer to the more mainstream attitudes that shrouded imperial rhetoric. Its central hypothesis found substantiation and elucidation through the use of commonly held imperial, religious, historical, and scientific opinions. It may be fairly said that the ultimate manifestation of late-nineteenth-century racial and nationalist thought in Britain was not the B.U.F. but the British-Israel World Federation. Thus, the theory and the movement that furthered it open a valuable historical window onto an aspect of British identity and nationalist experience that has yet to be fully explored.

Its largely mainstream messages, in fact, were the foundation stones of British-Israelism's considerable success. Its central contention concerning the Hebrew origin of the Anglo-Saxon race would seem to have sentenced the movement to a limited appeal and a brief existence. The allure of the theory, however, was felt by more than just a disaffected or uneducated minority looking for a sense of millennial salvation.[41] Its most active proponents and directors came from the educated and professional middle-class. From the organized movement's first appearance around 1870 to its culmination in 1919 with the formation of the British-Israel World Federation, it was characterized by slow but steady growth. More than once the movement was pronounced dead by its critics, yet

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27 May 1995, 2C. British-Israelism in South Africa also underwent a similar transformation; see, Chris Greyling, "From Hyper-Imperialist to Super-Afrikaner: The Developments Within a White Theology," *Journal for the Study of Religion* 5 (September 1992): 47-63.

[41]Though Virr argues that the movement was a form of modern day millennialism, I believe he has misinterpreted the motive force behind its appeal. See chapter five for a more detailed discussion of this subject.

it continued--and continues--to survive in spite of these obituary notices. As long as the empire continued to expand and as long as contemporary writings emphasized the racial foundations of imperial success, the theory's central messages remained current. British-Israelism spoke directly to this imperial racial pride and promised that British influence, under the guidance of the Divine, would continue to increase and solidify. It offered an explanation for past successes and encouraged a confidence in the future that went beyond what could be found elsewhere. To trace the ancestors of the modern inhabitants of Britain to the north of Europe, as was most commonly done, was only part of the process, British-Israelites maintained. They could claim the discovery of the race's nativity, rather than simply pointing out the most recent place of its migrations. The theory proffered racial progenitors of the Anglo-Saxon who, its adherents proposed, were actually worthy of the honor. In short, British-Israelism simply claimed to follow-up the conclusions of mainstream racial and imperial thought. It did not so much try to overturn as to accentuate accepted opinion. In its invocation of racial origins, imperial destiny, and divine Providence, the theory worked well within common intellectual and rhetorical parameters. Working from the premises that the Bible represented the unchanging word of God and that exclusivity of race defined a people, claiming an Israelitish origin for the Anglo-Saxons seemed to be the only logical conclusion available. It was an extreme conclusion, to be sure, but it was not beyond the pale of contemporary racial and imperial assumptions.

In the end, the British-Israel theory endowed the race with a hereditary quality that it did not receive as readily elsewhere, that of Providential destiny or Divine favor.

Tracing the race's descent from sea-faring, freedom-loving tribes of the north was sufficient to explain *how* the empire was created. It was considerably less effective in explaining its purpose. As the nineteenth century wore on, a sense of mission, of imperial burden, became injected into the analysis of empire.[42] The intellectual problem in most contemporary literature, however, was that though it could at once express a racial explanation for imperial prowess and an overarching mission for the empire it had difficulty in fully connecting the two. It could not explain why a particular people should be marked out for such a destiny. It could only assert that it had been. British-Israelism, however, had no such difficulty. It was built, in fact, upon the contention that the race and its mission had been inextricably tied for millennia. In British-Israel doctrine, the two key questions of this imperial identity -- 'Who are we?' and 'What is our mission?'-- did not simply lie adjacent to one another, they were contingent upon each other.[43] To answer either one was, by extension, to solve the other. If the British were Israelites, their mission was made clear in the Bible; likewise, if the Anglo-Saxon's mission was the one so commonly asserted in the press (to spread Christianity and civilization) then the only people who could claim any birthright to it were the children of Israel.[44] Maintaining its racial focus at all times, British-Israelism did not simply assert a mission for the Anglo-

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[42]C. C. Eldridge, *England's Mission: The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli, 1868-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 238-55.

[43]John Thornhill Harrison, *Who Are We? and What Is Our Mission?* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1887), 190.

[44]Archdeacon the Ven. F. W. Farrar, D.D., in a sermon preached at Westminster Abbey on Sunday, April 3, 1892, spoke directly to Britain's duty and destiny as God's chosen to be the evangelists and civilizers of the world. "The World For God," *The Christian World Pulpit* 41 (6 April 1892): 209-212.

Saxon race, it claimed to find the hereditary foundation for it. In a stroke, the British-Israel theory could explain the past growth, the present position, and the future greatness of the British Empire. All this was possible, it maintained, simply through the discovery of the origin of the Anglo-Saxon race.

The years between 1870 and 1920 have been established as the chronological parameters of this study for a number of reasons. First, the height of popular imperialism and rapid increase of British expansion took place, in the opinion of most scholars, beginning in the early 1870s and lasting until the First World War. Second, though in its modern form British-Israelism can be traced back to 1840, it did not experience an active propagation until around 1870. Third, the year 1920 (though two years after the end of the Great War) has been selected since it was in this year that the British-Israel World Federation held its first annual Congress, both solidifying the movement and marking its zenith. Though reference will be made to similar ideas and movements outside these chronological bounds, the focus of the study will be on these five decades. In short, these fifty years represent the parallel growth of British imperial pride and British-Israelism. This similarity, I hope to show in the course of this work, was no mere coincidence but rather the result of the close conceptual link between them. The sources used in this dissertation vary widely. The bulk of them come from the extensive printed literature of the movement itself. Other sources employed consist of contemporary newspaper, journal, and monograph material which discusses either British-Israelism, the extension of the empire, or the nature and destiny of the British race. The official reports of British-Israel organizations, when available, have been employed to gain some insights into the work-

ings, assets, and development of the various British-Israel associations that presaged the World Federation. These afford some insight into the spread of the belief itself. Both the chronology and sources of this work have been chosen primarily with the goal of placing the British-Israel theory within its proper intellectual context.

The challenge of this work will be to detail the nature, extent, and formation of the British-Israel theory and movement as well as to place them squarely within contemporary racial and imperial attitudes. Chapter 1 will address the 'context question' directly by assessing the role that the imperial experience played in the creation of British racial identity. This chapter will attempt to show that expansion was conceived of as a function of both race and destiny and that these, in turn, were traced to their respective historical sources. It was within the process of discovering the 'fountainhead' of imperial expansion that British-Israelism came to have a voice. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the history of British-Israelism. Chapter 2 explores the history, nature, and extent of the belief itself while Chapter 3 explains the growth of the organized movement which aided in its spread and worked to situate it among more widely held opinions. The evidence for the Identity marshaled by British-Israelites is examined in Chapters 4 and 5. It is not my purpose to prove or disprove the contentions of British-Israelism. Rather, these chapters will attempt to indicate from what sectors advocates pulled their evidence and how closely their conclusions echoed contemporary opinion. British-Israelites generally agreed that their evidence could be divided into two types, the scientific, or secular, and the scriptural. The first, used to show the biological descent of the British people from the people of Israel, will be discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 explores the scriptural evidence used by Brit-

ish-Israelites, primarily prophecy, to establish the link between Britain and Israel. Both types of evidence depended upon contemporary scientific, secular, and religious conclusions and in this way could claim outside confirmation from respected authorities. In Chapter 6 the link between British imperialism and British-Israelism will be explored in detail and firmly established. The tethering of the British-Israel theory to imperial rhetoric was a conscious activity, not an accidental parallel. This connection, in the end, was responsible for much of the movement's success and thus tells as much about the nature of popular imperial identity as it does about British-Israelism. This chapter, therefore, establishes the major contention of this work, that the idea of racial origins lay at the core of British imperial identity.

In any work focusing mainly on ideas and beliefs there is apt to be some confusion of terminology. In order to offset this distraction as much as possible the definitions of several of the most widely used terms in this study are provided here. What I have termed British-Israelism throughout this introduction was often known as Anglo-Israelism. The term British-Israelism did not become the standard name for the belief, in fact, until after the creation of the British-Israel World Federation in 1919. It will be the term that this study will most often employ since it is now the name by which the theory is officially known. Many contemporaries, however, referred to it as Anglo-Israelism and thus this term will appear in many citations. At times the movement will also be referred to as the 'Identity.' This was the shorthand name used most often by contemporaries. In and of itself, moreover, this term is important to this study since it indicates that the establishment of the identity of the Anglo-Saxon race was the belief's core concern. I have,

as much as possible, avoided using the phrase "national identity," to describe the process under investigation in this dissertation. This is because the implications and adoption of British-Israelism (not to mention Anglo-Saxonism) extended beyond the borders of the *nation* of Great Britain. It found many adherents throughout the 'Anglo-Saxon world' and thus it helped to create a sense of the wider racial identity rather than a strict national one. The focus here is on the "imperial racial identity" of Greater Britain rather than on the national identity of Britain itself. Finally, "Anglo-Saxonism" may be somewhat confusing for those not familiar with late-nineteenth-century racial terminology. Though not all the inhabitants of Great Britain or the 'white' colonies were descended from the Angles or the Saxons, the term "Anglo-Saxons" came to refer to the whole of the British people (with the possible exception of the non-Ulster Irish) and "Anglo-Saxonism" to the faith that many people held as to the imperial superiority of this people. A more detailed discussion of this idea and of the contemporary ideas of race is to be found in Chapter 1.

## CHAPTER ONE

## THE EMPIRE AND THE BRITISH RACE

Popular interest in Britain's imperial expansion increased markedly in the final three decades of the nineteenth century. Culminating in the conspicuously jingoistic tenor of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, the pride associated with 'painting the map red' sought, and found, myriad outlets of expression.[1] Yet simply parading the marvelous accomplishments of Britain in the world as though they were part of the fleet reviewed at Spithead that Jubilee day was somehow unsatisfactory. That they existed was undoubtedly grand. Yet for at least the last thirty years of the century an integral part of surveying the growth of the British empire lay in explaining the reasons behind it, in divining both its origins and its destiny. Confidence in the moral righteousness of the empire, in its power to effect good in the world, in its civilizing mission, and in its permanency directed the quest for an underlying meaning along paths away from the vulgarities of profit motive and military conquest. British imperial expansion was worthy of a much higher estimation. This pride of empire derived in large part from a growing sense that the British people, from their very origin, had been predestined, perhaps even chosen, for

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[1]For a description of the Jubilee celebrations and a general discussion of 'imperial feeling' at the time see James Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets: An Imperial Retreat* (San Diego: Harvest/HBJ, 1978), 21-32. For examples and analyses of late-century popular imperialism see John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); idem, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

a special task to perform in the world. Thus developed a powerful connection between the identity of the British 'race' and the existence and destiny of the empire.

The race was both the source of the empire's greatness and the guarantor of its future. In turn, its splendor and moral uprightness indicated that the bloodline responsible for its creation was in itself extraordinary. In this way the identity of the British people and the development and course of the empire found themselves inexorably linked. The imperial experience, in fact, was one of the paramount factors in and influences on the formation of British identity in the late-nineteenth century. Almost like a planispherical looking glass, the world map which hung upon the wall seemed to reflect the British character ever more clearly as the empire grew. Each addition of territory further confirmed what was to be taken for granted by the turn of the century: that the British truly were an imperial race. Despite the Victorian penchant for a schematic understanding of the world, however, this imperial identity generally eluded complete tabulation and classification. Though certain broad outlines emerged (generally as the result of repetition rather than analysis), the specifics of the Anglo-Saxon's origin and imperial character retained a degree of flexibility allowing them to dilate or contract as the imperial landscape changed. Despite this malleability nearly everyone agreed that the Anglo-Saxon's imperial prowess had sprung from innate and inherited characteristics making him the most successful adventurer, soldier, colonist, and sea-farer in the history of the world. His inherent acumen in the administration of justice and good government, coupled with his imperial 'instincts,' assured the peaceful and prosperous future of the empire. This focus on the racial origins of the empire invariably brought the race's own origin into consid-

eration. Whence had the modern Anglo-Saxon come, was the common question, that he should possess such an imperial nature? Origins, particularly racial origins, became the foundation for this imperial identity. The establishment of imperial racial traits and the conjoining of them to the history and origin of the race gave the British empire a type of retroactive legitimacy. Centuries before the existence of the modern empire, the racial character of the British people had been formed in such a way as to make imperial expansion inevitable.

Explicit in all of this, of course, was the broad and free application of nineteenth-century racial concepts.[2] To be British was less about professing a national allegiance or cultural heritage than possessing inherited and inalienable racial traits. Though related to national or cultural identity, this racial understanding of self held important distinctions. Racial identity was both substantive and exclusive, and during much of its existence it was cloaked in the authority of science. It did not, in general, define itself against the outside world; it was not primarily a process of Othering. The Anglo-Saxon race was readily definable in terms of what it was and where it had come from not so much by what or who it was not; this process being made easier by the existence of the tangible experience of empire. Imperial success supplied a string of characteristics befitting the

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[2]Racial thought in the late-nineteenth century has received a significant amount of attention. A good introduction is found in Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971). See also Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1982); Douglas A. Lorimer, "*Nature*, Racism, and Late Victorian Science," *Canadian Journal of History* 25 (December 1990): 369-85; Paul Rich, "The Long Victorian Sunset: Anthropology, Eugenics and Race in Britain, c1900-48," *Patterns of Prejudice* 18 (3: 1984): 3-17.

Anglo-Saxon and his ancestry. These traits and this destiny belonged to the Anglo-Saxon alone, they were inimitable and irrevocable. They were the products of blood, not of acculturation or education, and therefore could neither be replicated nor eliminated by foreign foes. If the government was concerned about other imperial Powers, especially Germany and France, encroaching on Britain's virtual monopoly of empire, there yet remained a sustaining confidence in the race's continued hegemony. It was a confidence, in fact, which often crossed the hazy line of demarcation into that of religious faith.[3]

It is the purpose of this chapter to outline in brief the nature and extent of this imperial Anglo-Saxon identity. Rarely did an article or book on the British Empire appear in which the nature of the race did not assume the lion's share of credit for the imperial successes. Likewise, any racial analysis of the Anglo-Saxon was considered incomplete if it did not account for the marvelous expansion of the race throughout the world. Through school text-books and church sermons, anthropological studies and geographies, histories and political treatises, plus the numerous journal articles in the popular and more specialized press, the message rang clear. Not only was the empire the direct product of racial factors, but the Anglo-Saxon race found its clearest definition in terms of the origin and existence of these imperial traits. This correlative relationship went some distance to explain the how, if not the why, of imperial expansion. The empire was the product of the race and thus would remain secure as long as the race could avoid degeneration. And though this idea helped to craft an identity for the British people, it did not sufficiently

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[3]Raymond F. Betts, *The False Dawn: European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), 19-20; Richard Faber, *The Vision and the Need: Late Victorian Imperialist Aims* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1966), 122.

explain the reasons why the Anglo-Saxon should be so blessed in his racial gifts. It was here that the faith in the British race as a chosen people with a special destiny emerged and took hold in popular perceptions of the empire. Religious ideas often offer solutions which the strictly secular cannot. It was the invocation of this religious creed that endowed the empire with metaphysical direction to augment its racial origin and security.

This 'imperial' Anglo-Saxonism redirects many of the questions involved in the study of British identity. The most common analytical approaches to identity formation have either overlooked or misrepresented the role of the British imperial experience in the process. Scholars have most often presented identity formation in Great Britain in one of two ways. Earlier analyses contended that it was primarily a process of 'blending' the disparate cultural groups, English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, etc., into a larger culture composed of elements of all.[4] More recently scholars have suggested that in the face of an unfamiliar or potentially hostile Other, the various cultural divisions were subsumed under a larger "British" identity.[5] The groups need not forsake their cultural diversity but simply adopt an 'umbrella' identity to present a united front against a fundamentally dissimilar foreigner. Scholars hve also introduced the imperial experience, somewhat uncomfortably, into both of these models. Colonial expansion, it is argued, offered incentives to the blending process by creating a common enterprise in which all 'Britons' could

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[4]Keith Robbins, *Nineteenth-Century Britain: England Scotland and Wales, The Making of A Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 4-6, chapter 7; Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

[5]Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*; Linda Colley, *Britons*, 6-7; idem, "Britishness and Otherness: An Argument," *Journal of British Studies* 31 (October 1992): 309-29.

engage, as well as increasing the potential exportation of different aspects of British culture.[6] In addition, the contact and competition which the empire forced between the British and a variety of peoples throughout the world expanded the field of Others against which the British could compare themselves.[7] This chapter will show that the identity fostered by the empire can not be so easily explained by the processes of blending or "Othering." This identity arose from a confidence built upon racial origins and from a powerful sense of destiny, both of which were less susceptible to the feelings of malleability and vulnerability which the above processes require. The cultural diversity of the Isles was subalternated beneath a racial homogeneity and stability; there was no need to 'blend' a substantially congruous people. The culture within Britain could vary widely without affecting the basic racial unity and thus fundamental security. Furthermore, since the empire both expressed and confirmed the marvelous racial traits of the Anglo-Saxon, there was little need to create an identity through the comparative process of Othering. Contemporary writers spent less of their time contrasting the British with other races and peoples and more of it delineating those traits which exemplified the Anglo-Saxon race. There is, of course, an implied 'Other' in every identity (by defining who we are we also eliminate others from us) but imperial Anglo-Saxonism was far more important in establishing an identity based on the discovery and exhibition of specific racial characteristics than in setting up opposition against other people of the world.

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[6]Robbins, *Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 2-3; Colley, "Britishness and Otherness," 325.

[7]Robin Cohen, *Frontiers of Identity*; Robert H. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, 32-43; Robbins, "Images of the Foreigner in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain," chap. in *History Religion and Identity in Modern Britain*, 65.

**The British Race**

Identity formation in Britain during the last decades of the nineteenth-century consisted largely of racial concepts and structures. Though the particulars of this racial understanding were debated vigorously in Britain's learned societies, a systematic understanding of the Anglo-Saxon race was of less concern to the public at large.[8] The term 'race' was bandied about at will, the very looseness of its meaning being one of its most enduring strengths. As late as 1892, Thomas de Courcy Atkins lamented that "ethnologists have not yet agreed on a definition of 'race;' it is still a popular and not a scientific expression."[9] It was understood, in general, as denoting a close blood relationships between peoples or an extension of the notion of kinship; and like the idea of kin it involved both exclusivity and elasticity.[10] Central to the concept, of course, was a divination of biological ancestry. The elucidation (more often the assertions) of racial origins

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[8]Douglas Lorimer, "Theoretical Racism in Late-Victorian Anthropology, 1870-1900," *Victorian Studies* (Spring 1988), 405-30.

[9]T. de Courcy Atkins, *The Kelt or the Gael: His Ethnography, Geography and Philology* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), 11.

[10]The idea of race in the Victorian mind is extraordinarily difficult to fully define. Edward A. Freeman recognized this difficulty and the wide confusion which arose from it. He concluded that the concept of race is in a sense "artificial," meaning that it arose not so much naturally from the minds of the people but was introduced from the scientifically minded. Consequently, when the idea became popularized it also became very difficult to keep within certain 'scientifically' defined limits. Freeman, "Race and Language," *Contemporary Review* 29 (1877): 711-41. Hugh MacDougall has perhaps come closest to the most useful definition of the Victorian idea of race in his assessment that , "though the term race defies precise definition, in its primary sense it has reference to the common biological origins of a particular people." *Racial Myth in English History*, 2. For this idea's relationship to the concept of 'nation' see Aviel Roshwald, "Untangling the Knotted Cord: Studies of Nationalism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24 (Autumn 1993): 302.

helped to define the parameters of British character as well as establish the race's relationship to the people of the Continent. Often, however, this mapping of the exact boundaries of the 'race' was problematic. While in the later years of the century the 'Anglo-Saxon' emerged as a race in its own right, the common perception remained that the British were a subgroup of the larger Teutonic or Germanic race having descended from successive waves of Nordic invaders.[11] More broadly, the Teutons were a segment, though the leading one, of the entire 'white race' of Europe which was the vanguard of civilization. Since at least the sixteenth century, European civilization had been progressively spreading throughout the world with the late-nineteenth-century African 'Scramble' confirming the White Man's hegemony. This racial assessment of European expansion, in turn, forced an appraisal of Britain's relationship with the Continental powers. Few denied that the British race was somehow related to the races of the Continent. Opinion varied widely, however, on how close the original connection was. The concept of race, like that of family, possessed an elasticity ranging from 'nuclear' to 'immediate' to 'extended,' and as with family the nuclear body was usually the most potent and important.

The British as part of the white race or even as Teutons did not strike the imagination or impart nearly the degree of pride and identity as did the idea of the British as a

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[11]Freeman discussed the emergence of this racial nomenclature as follows: " In my youth the 'Anglo-Saxon race' was unheard of, and the 'British race' dates, I believe, only from the speech of last week from which I quote [*Times* (London) 16 November 1889]." "The Latest Theories on the Origin of the English," *The Contemporary Review* 57 (January 1890): 50. The close relationship between the British and the other Teutonic peoples was questioned by several ethnologists of the latter half of the nineteenth century. It nevertheless remained a popular concept, though few would admit that the modern Germans and Anglo-Saxons were in any way identical.

race in and of themselves. When they were lumped together with the Teutons and the "White Race" the exclusivity of race waned and, consequently, so did the power of the entire concept. It became increasingly important to recognize the distinctive nature of the Anglo-Saxon race, especially as its being the secret of their imperial successes. Though other European nations may have been rapidly joining the ranks of imperial powers by the 1880s, the British were regularly assured by articles in their newspapers that these countries did not have the necessary racial qualities to succeed. Every setback in Germany's or France's imperial expansion was pointed out as proof of their incapacity to rule others or spread abroad.[12] The case of the Anglo-Saxon, however, was far different. Numerous writers, politicians, and scholars assessed the future of the world in terms of the origin and character of the Anglo-Saxon and the nature of his empire. These authors fed an increasing interest in the English-speaking world for writings which addressed the future of the race and its role in the world. Indeed, in 1903 and again in 1906, the United States Library of Congress issued a special list of works on "Anglo-Saxon Interests" directing readers' attention to literature dealing with the issues of Anglo-Saxon supremacy.[13] This compilation, the editor remarked, had originally been a simple type-written document in-

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[12]See, for example, an article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 22 June 1883. The author details the failings of other colonizing powers and determines that Britain's imperial successes "are not the results of accident or craft--they are the facts that spring from some inherent instincts and capacities of the Anglo-Saxon folk whose lives have made our island story."

[13]Appleton Prentiss Clark Griffin, Chief Bibliographer, comp., *Library of Congress Select List of References on Anglo-Saxon Interests*, 2d ed. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906). Listed in this work are two British-Israel publications: Martin Lyman Streator, *The Anglo-American Alliance in Prophecy, or the Promise to the Fathers* (London: The Werner Co., 1900); and a series of two articles by H. L. Chamberlain. "The

tended to fulfill requests by mail but "the applications have become so numerous that it has now been reduced to print, so as to be available for more general distribution."[14] Despite the convenient and summary term "white man's burden," it became apparent in the waning years of the century that the task of empire had been especially tailored for a specific race of white men: the Anglo-Saxons. The nature and future of the empire, therefore, was discussed most often in terms both sanguine and sanguineous. The empire's ultimate origin, fundamental security, and marvelous destiny sprung from the blood of the race who had created it.

This understanding of the racial identity of Britain assumed at least two important facets of the Anglo-Saxon race. First, it postulated that the inhabitants of the British Isles were, all in all, racially homogenous. Though culturally diverse, the peoples of Great Britain might be considered essentially one race. In an address to the Edinburgh Literary Institute on November 11, 1891, the Rev. Dr. MacGregor, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, after making a deferential nod to the achievements of the Scots in the formation of the empire, asserted that:

> so far as our race was concerned, it was our glory and our strength, and it ought to be our pride, that we were a people of one origin or of one blood. To speak of the Scottish people, the English people, and the Irish people as if they were three perfectly distinct races was pernicious nonsense. The same blood was in them all. Their conditions were different, their histories were sadly different; but as a people they were one. . . . They were all alike; Scottish, English, Irish belonged to one great family, the British race. . . . By far the most remarkable fact about the British race was the vast extension within recent times of its power, its possessions, and its people over the face of the earth. Britain's first heritage in the world was a splendid race of men--a race made up of the various strains of the best blood of Europe. The genius

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Genesis of the Saxon Race," and "Whence Came the Anglo-Saxon." *Overland Monthly* 43 (January and February 1904): 70-72, 157-60.

[14]Griffin, *Select List of References*, 3.

> of our people was our best heritage--that restless spirit of adventure, seafaring habit, love of conquest and colonisation, and that marvellous capacity for rule, which were in our blood, and which we drew from our old Norse and Anglo-Saxon and Celtic forefathers. (Applause.)[15]

The race's genius, in MacGregor's analysis, had sprung from its origin, formed from an amalgam of the 'best blood' of Europe. In a series of letters to the *Times*, Sir John Lubbock expressed his dismay that the Home Rule question was being defended by the assumption that "there are in the United Kingdom four distinct races, and that the existence of four distinct races is reason why we should permit one of them [Ireland] to have a separate Legislature and a separate Executive." After quoting Dr. John Beddoe, president of the London Anthropological Society, Lubbock concluded that the proposition of four distinct races ignored the "undeniable ethnological fact that the English, Irish, and Scotch were all composed of the same elements, and in not very dissimilar proportions."[16] MacGregor's, Lubbock's, and Beddoe's idea of homogenization through intermixture was probably the most common understanding of the process. From a variety of races, the British had intermingled to emerge essentially as one type.[17]

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[15]*Scotsman*, 12 November, 1891; quoted in, *Banner of Israel: A Weekly Journal, Edited by Philo-Israel, Advocating the Identity of the British Nation with the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel* 16 (January 6, 1892): 20.

[16]John Lubbock, "The Nationalities of the United Kingdom, Letter to the Editor" *Times* (London), 19 March 1887. For more on the role of the Irish Home Rule question of the racial understanding of Britain see MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History*, 123.

[17]"The British Race-Types of Today, Parts I and II," *Times* (London), 11 October 1887, 25 October 1887.

The idea of a 'mongrel' British race, however, did pose potential problems for the discovery of their racial character. The mixed nature of the British people might impede both the discovery of their origins and ascription of universal racial traits. This problem was solved, at least in the minds of many late-Victorian scholars and popular writers, by the assertion that on the whole the British were made up of racial elements belonging to the same original stock and that the absorption power of such a basically homogenous ancestry meant that the race was virtually uniform and, as much as could be expected from any modern people, relatively pure.[18] Though Britain had been overrun many times since the Roman occupation, the invaders were all kinsmen. French ethnologist Georges Vacher de Lapouges found in a 'strictly scientific' assessment of the state of modern society that "the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon races in vitality, vigour, and capacity for expansion to be, everywhere, a happy confirmation of his ethnological creed."[19] This creed was simply that the fair, northern European, dolichocephalic (long-headed) peoples must dominate the world. The splendid fortunes of the British Isles were due to the fact that it was comprised wholly of this race. Anthropologist Nottidge Charles Macnamara concluded that, "the racial character . . . of the people of England was not altered by the Scandinavian, Danish, or Norman invasions of the country. . . . From the time of the Norman conquest to the present day no further successful invasion of our shores has been

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[18]This interpretation was of critical importance to British-Israelites since if all the elements of the British race could be traced to one primitive stock, then all that was left to do was to connect this stock to the Lost Tribes. Thus the British were not an amalgam of different races but a reunion of the various tribes of the Hebrew race.

[19]H. D. Oakeley, "On Some French Appreciations of the Anglo-Saxon Genius," *Westminster Review* 152 (July 1899): 73-74.

effected, and so, from the eleventh to the nineteenth century the racial character of the English people has not altered."[20] The authority of historians such as Carlyle, Thierry, and Freeman gave credence to the claim that the Normans, Danes, Angles, Saxons, Frisians, and the like were all near relations. "Thus grew up the English nation," wrote Freeman, "a nation formed by the union of various tribes of the same stock." Freeman even described the 'foreign' Norman as simply a "disguised kinsman; he was a Dane who had gone into Gaul to get covered with French varnish, and who came into England to get washed clean again."[21] In his *Pedigree of the English People*, Thomas Nicholas repeated Sir F. Palgrave's conclusions that "Britons, Anglo-Saxons, Danes and Normans were all

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[20]Nottidge Charles Macnamara, *Origin and Character of the British People* (London: Smith, Elder & Company, 1900), 174-75.

[21]Freeman, "The Origin of the English Nation," Macmillan's Magazine 21 (1870): 428-29; Augustin Thierry, *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans*, trans. William Hazlitt (London: David Bogue, 1847; originally published 1825), 1: 56. For Carlyle's assessment of the racial origin of the Norman see Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest*, 95-96. Despite his conclusions on the homogeneity of the race, Freeman was uncomfortable with the invocation of the term "Anglo-Saxon race" to describe the British people. He understood that such a convenient phrase would often be used for questionable racial assessments of the future of Britain by statesmen and politicians. The phrase "the Imperial instincts of the Anglo-Saxon race," he explained, had become a catch-all motto for the expansion of the empire. "The Latest Theories," 36. One of the earliest assertions of this kinship can be found in Richard Verstegan, *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities of the Most Nobly and Renowned English Nation* (London, 1673), 203-04. For others, see John Beddoe, *The Races of Britain: A Contribution to the Ethnology of Western Europe* (Bristol: J. Arrowsmith; London: Trubner & Co., 1885), 93; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England : Its Causes and Its Results*, 2d. ed. rev. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1870), 1: 147-48; Rev. A. H. Johnson, *The Normans in Europe*, 2d ed., Epochs in Modern History Series (London: Longmans Green and Company, 1880), 2; George Troup, editor of the *Daily Mail*, Glasgow, *Our Anglo-Saxon Empire: Being a Review of the Present Position of Great Britain and Her Colonies*, (London: Simpkin and Marshall; Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, Glasgow: G. Gallie, 1850), 5; and George Griffith, *Men Who Have Made the Empire* 2d ed. (London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., 1897), 7.

relations; however hostile, they were all kinsmen, shedding kindred blood."[22] In Nicholas' opinion the ancient "Briton" was simply an amalgam of various so-called Celtic tribes all of the same origin and same race.[23] Likewise, the "Teutonic" invaders (Jutes, Angles, Saxons, Danes and Normans) were all racial kin. Though the modern British people were compounded from the Celtic and Teutonic stocks, "these two generic stocks, . . . would, if traced backwards, meet in one."[24] Professor Thomas Henry Huxley went even further in proposing the highly controversial thesis that the perceived difference between the 'Celtic' and 'Teutonic' or Saxon elements of Britain was erroneous. During a lecture on "The Forefathers of the English People in the Mainland of Europe and Asia," he informed his listeners that "the invasion of the Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Northmen, changed the language of Britain *but added no new physical element.* Therefore . . . we must talk no more of Celts and Saxons, for all are one. 'I never lose an opportunity of rooting up that false idea that the Celts and Saxons are different races.'"[25] If there remained the larger general opinion that the British Isles consisted still of Celtic (meaning primarily Irish) and Anglo-Saxon peoples, there also existed a strong sentiment that the

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[22]Sir F. Palgrave, *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth: Anglo-Saxon Period* (London: John Murray, 1832), I: 35.

[23]Thomas Nicholas, M.A., Ph.D., F.G.S., *The Pedigree of the English People: An Argument, Historical and Scientific*, 5th ed. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., 1878), 33, 58.

[24]Ibid., 124.

[25]Rev. Charles Maurice Davies, D.D., "A Sunday Lecture By Professor Huxley," chap. in *Unorthodox London; or, Phases of Religious Life in the Metropolis*, 3rd ed. (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1875), 53. See also Huxley, "The Forefathers and Forerunners of the English People," *Pall Mall Gazette* (London), 10 January 1870. John McKinnon Robertson makes a similar contention in *The Saxon and the Celt: A Study in Sociology* (London: University Press, 1897).

Anglo-Saxon element was largely homogenous and by far the most dominant of the two.[26] The notion of a single Anglo-Saxon, or British, race was not only the common appellation given to British people everywhere it could also claim a scientific foundation in authoritative opinion.[27]

The second key racial aspect of Anglo-Saxonism was the claim of distinctiveness. Increasingly called into question was the commonly held opinion of the Teutonic descent of the British and their close ethnic relationship to the modern nations of northern Europe, particularly to Germany. The Anglo-Saxon race was not only homogenous, it was also fundamentally unique. Rather than being descended directly from the Germanic peoples of the continent, the Anglo-Saxons were at best distant cousins of the modern Teutonic peoples. That the ancestors of the British had passed through the forests of Germany and had left the shores of northern Europe for the Isles of Britain no one disputed. A number of historians and ethnologists alike, however, concluded that to draw from this that the modern Germans were near relations to the British was an unjustified leap of reasoning. At the very least, the unique admixture of races in the isles of Britain had made the modern British people unlike any other European. As early as the 1850s Dr. Latham, in his *Ethnology of the British Islands*, cast some of the first doubts as to the

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[26]L. P. Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (Bridgeport, CT: University of Bridgeport, 1968). Freeman, for instance, contended that the British population was by and large 'Teutonic' in origin. The ancient Celtic populations were, for all intents and purposes, extirpated from the islands. The 'Celtic' populations of modern Britain differed from the rest primarily in terms of language not blood. Freeman, *History of the Norman Conquest*, 1: 12-13.

[27]*Sentinel* (Toronto), 28 December 1920.

British and German relationship by contending that "throughout the whole length and breadth of Germany there is not one village, hamlet, or family which can shew definite signs of descent from the continental ancestors of the Angles of England."[28] These English ancestors, in other words, had left the shores of Germany in their entirety leaving no relation, German or otherwise, on the continent of Europe. Huxley, quoting Latham, indicated that though the modern language of Britain is without a doubt Anglo-Saxon, "it is by no means so certain that the blood of Englishmen is equally Germanic."[29] Dr. Pike, through his own experiments and observations as well as use of the work of Dr. Beddoe, J. B. Davis and J. Thurman, concluded that the modern British race could not have descended even from the same original stock as the modern Germans. Using the then commonly accepted methods of cephalic indices, anthropometrics, and psychological, or 'moral', comparisons, Pike remarked that "the English type agrees in the main, though showing some minor variations, with the Cymric type of head; . . . and that type not only differs from the Teutonic type, but stands at the opposite end of the scale."[30] Decades later, Professor W. Z. Ripley, found that the cephalic indices of the Anglo-Saxon race dif-

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[28]Robert Gordon Latham, *Ethnology of the British Islands* (London: John Van Voorst, 1852), 217, 259-60. Latham, like many of those who cast doubt on the German-English relationship, based his conclusion on the unique admixture of races found in Britain and well as on the subsequent invasions of Germany after the departure of the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, etc. which comprised the ancestors of the modern Germanic race.

[29]Latham, *Man and His Migrations*, 171; quoted in Huxley, "On The Methods and Results of Ethnology," *Critiques and Addresses* (London: Macmillan, 1873), 139.

[30]Luke Owen Pike, *The English and Their Origin: A Prologue To Authentic English History* (London: Longmans, Green, 1866), 137-38, 242. See Davis and Thurman, *Crania Britannica: Delineations and Descriptions of the Skulls of the Aboriginal and Early Inhabitants of the British Islands*, (London: Printed for the Subscribers, 1856-65), 241.

fered dramatically from those of the modern German."[31] Alexander Del Mar, in 1900, not only reconfirmed that the Jutes, Angles, Saxons, and Normans were identical peoples under different names but also that "the Saxons, or Northmen, and the Germans have teleologically nothing in common."[32] At the time of the First World War, of course, this attempt to distance the British racially from the Germans increased substantially.[33] Nonetheless, it is clear that for at least the previous half century a substantial current of thought had already proposed this racial cleavage.

Scientific opinion concerning the racial origins and nature of the British people was hardly unanimous.[34] The spirited nature of the debate, however, attests to the importance which these racial interpretations of British history held in the opinion of contemporary scholars. Moreover, while maintaining some of the most basic conclusions, once the issue emerged from scientific circles it distilled down into what has become known as 'Anglo-Saxonism.'[35] Whatever its ingredients or however closely cognate to those of the

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[31]William Z. Ripley, *The Races of Europe* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1899; London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1900).

[32]Alexander Del Mar, *Ancient Britain In Light of Modern Archaeological Discoveries* (New York: The Cambridge Encyclopedia Co., 1900), 11, 141.

[33]See for example Arthur Keith, M.D., "The War From a New Angle: Are We Cousin to the German?" *The Graphic* (London), 4 December 1915.

[34]The most common disagreement was the debate between the 'Teutonists' or those who held to the dominance of the Teutonic element in Great Britain, of which Freemen was undoubtedly a leading figure and those who contended that the British were on the whole heavily 'Celtic' and quite distinct from the Teutonic peoples of Europe; Huxley, Nicholas, and Beddoe, among others, taking up this case.

[35]A good description of Anglo-Saxonism can be found in MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History*, 2. See also Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, 2nd ed.

continent, Anglo-Saxonists believed, the modern race of Great Britain was a real and powerful agent in recent world history. The most remarkable fact about the British, or Anglo-Saxon, race was its imperial history, it having been the author of the greatest empire the world had ever seen. Almost universally it was conceded that this had been accomplished through the Anglo-Saxon's inherent qualities: traits which it had derived from its ancestors. These were the secrets of the race's success and the marks by which it distinguished itself from all others. They were real, manifest, limited, and enumerable. They became, in essence, the crux of British racial identity.

**The Empire and An Imperial Race**

This imperial Anglo-Saxonism, it is true, was by no means a monolithic idea. The 'imperial' characteristics of the race were never universally determined. Even though writers recognized a wide variety of these traits, some general pattern did emerge. In general, the Anglo-Saxon's imperial prowess sprung from its innate energy,[36]

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chap. 1; Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts*, 11-12.

[36]Some books which express this idea are: John L. Brandt, LL.D., *Anglo-Saxon Supremacy: or, Race Contributions to Civilization,* with an Introduction by James W. Lee, D.D., Human Personality Series (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1915; Toronto: The Copp Clark Co., 1915); Hereford Brooke George, M.A., F.R.G.S., *A Historical Geography of the British Empire,* 2nd ed. (London: Methuen and Co., 1905); Montagu George Jesset, F.R.G.S., *The Bond of Empire* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1902); Edward Frederick Knight, *Over-Seas Britain: A Descriptive Record of the Geography, the Historical, Ethnological, and Political Development, and the Economic Resources of the Empire* (Toronto: Musso Book Co., 1908; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1907); Reginald Brabazon, 12th Earl of Meath, M. H. Cornwall-Legh, L.L.A., and Edith Jackson, *Our Empire, Past and Present.* Vols. 1 & 2. (London: Harrison and Son, 1901, 1905); Benjamin Parsons *The Greatness of the British Empire Traced to Its Sources* (London: John Cassell, 1851); Hon. Sir J. Robinson (K.C.M.G.), Late Premier of Natal, *The Colonies and the Century* (London: Macmillan, 1899); Alfred Thomas Story, *The Building of the British Empire: The Story of England's Growth from Elizabeth to Victoria,* The Story of the Na-

adventurous spirit,[37] sense of self-reliance and independence,[38] bravery,[39] and what was commonly termed grit or 'pluck'.[40] The British race had inherited certain imperial instincts from its ancestors. These included a governing instinct based on liberty and

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tions Series. vol. 1 *1558-1688*, Vol. 2, *1689-1895* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1898); William Harrison Woodward, Christ Church, Oxford, *A Short History of the Expansion of the British Empire, 1500-1911,* Cambridge Series for Schools and Training Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915). For articles see: William Clarke, "Present Mood of England," *New England Magazine* 16 (August 1897): 690-96; Hugh Percy Dunn, "Is Our Race Degenerating?" *Nineteenth Century* 36 (August 1894): 301-14; "From the New Gibbon." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 165 (February 1899): 241-49; "The Growth of the British Empire." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 159 (March 1896): 364-81; David Mills, Canadian Minister for Justice, "Which Shall Dominate--Saxon or Slav?" *North American Review* 186 (June 1898): 729-39; Michael G. Mullhall, "Our Colonial Empire." *Contemporary Review* 67 (1895): 632-43; J. G. Muirhead, "What Imperialism Means," *Fortnightly Review* 74 (August 1900): 177-87; John Rhys, "Race Theories and European Politics," *New Princeton Review* 5 (January 1888): 1-17; Sir John Lawson Walton, "Imperialism," *Contemporary Review* 75 (March 1899): 305-10.

[37]Meath, et. al., *Our Empire, Past and Present*; Brandt, *Anglo-Saxon Supremacy*; George, *The Bond of Empire*; Knight, *Over-Seas Britain*; James Stanley Little, *Progress of British Empire in the Century.* The Nineteenth Century Series (Toronto: Linscott Publishing, 1903); George R. Parkin, M.A., *Round the Empire--For the Use of Schools,* with a Preface by the Right Hon. The Earl of Rosebery, K.G. (London: Cassell and Company, 1893). See also "From the New Gibbon," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.*

[38]Meath et. al., *Our Empire, Past and Present*; James Stanley Little, *Progress of British Empire in the Century*; Woodward, *A Short History of the Expansion of the British Empire*; Macnamara, *Origin and Character of the British People*; Edward Jenks, M.A., B.C.L., *The Government of the British Empire* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1919), 70; John Lowles, M.P., "The British Empire: Its Resources and Its Future." Proceedings of the Society. Paper Read April 5, 1898. Marquis of Lorne, K.T., G.K.M.G., in the Chair. *Journal of the Society of Arts* 46 (April 22 1898): 497-509.

[39]This idea can be found in Jessett, *The Bond of Empire*; Sir James Hight, M.A., *The English As a Colonising Nation,* Public School Historical Reader Series (London: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1903). Also Rhys, "Race Theories and European Politics"; Walton, "Imperialism."

[40]Little, *Progress of British Empire in the Century*; Macnamara, *Origin and Character of the British People.* See also Van Buren Denslow, "Are We Saxon or Roman?" *Social*

justice,[41] a natural faculty for labor and administration,[42] sea-faring and trading instincts,[43] and what was simply termed a colonizing instinct or 'genius for empire.'[44]

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*Economist* 6 (1894): 289-97; Muirhead, "What Imperialism Means," *Fortnightly Review* 74 (August 1900): 177-87; Rhys, "Race Theories and European Politics."

[41]Robinson, *The Colonies and the Century*; Major Stewart L. Murray, *The Peace of the Anglo-Saxons: To the Working Men and Their Representatives*, with a Preface by Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, K.G. (London: Watts & Co., 1905); Meath, et. al., *Our Empire, Past and Present*; J. A. Cramb, M.A., Professor of Modern History, Queen's College London, *Reflections on the Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1900); Hight, *The English As a Colonising Nation*; Jessett, *The Bond of Empire*; Macnamara, *Origin and Character of the British People*; Story, *The Building of the British Empire*; Parsons, *The Greatness of the British Empire Traced to Its Sources*. Articles include: "Ambassador Hay's Easter Speech," *The Critic* 32 (May 28 1898): 361-62; A.V. Dicey, "A Common Citizen For the English Race," *Contemporary Review* 71 (April 1897): 457-76; "The Growth of the British Empire," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*; William Laird Clowes, "American Expansion and the Inheritance of the Race," *Fortnightly Review* (1898): 884-92; W. J. Courthope, "The Society of the British Empire," *National Review* 39 (1902): 747-58; Percy A. Hurd, "The New Imperialism," *Contemporary Review* 72 (1897): 171-83, H. H. Johnston, "Problems of the British Empire," *Nineteenth Century* 51 (May 1902): 716-31; Mills, "Which Shall Dominate--Saxon or Slav?"

[42]Meath, et. al., *Our Empire, Past and Present*; Hight, *The English As a Colonising Nation*; Macnamara, *Origin and Character of the British People*; Muirhead, "What Imperialism Means."

[43]Robinson, *The Colonies and the Century*; Brandt, *Anglo-Saxon Supremacy*; Hight, *The English As a Colonising Nation*; Knight, *Over-Seas Britain*; J. Foster Palmer, L.R.C.P., F.R.Hist.S., "The Saxon Invasion and Its Influences on Our Character as A Race," Paper Read before the Royal Historical Society, January 1884. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* n.s. vol. II. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1885); Edgar Sanderson, M.A. *The British Empire at Home and Abroad: An Account of Its Origin, Progress, and Present Position* (London: Gresham Publishing Co., 1901): 1: 16; Woodward, *A Short History of the Expansion of the British Empire*; Albert James Berry, M.A., *Britannia's Growth and Greatness: An Historical Geography of the British Empire* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1913); George Griffith, *Men Who Have Made the Empire,* 2d ed. (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1897). Also, "The Growth of the British Empire." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*; Denslow, "Are We Saxon or Roman?"

[44]Cramb, *Reflections on the Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain*; Palmer, "The Saxon Invasion and Its Influences on Our Character as a Race"; Sanderson, *The British Empire at Home and Abroad*; Thomas William Shore, *Origin of the Anglo-Saxon Race: A*

Also unclear were the specific 'imperial' progenitors of the modern British people. The question provoked a variety of theories, including British-Israelism, each discovering an ancestor or ancestors with the appropriate characteristics. The perenniality of the question attested to its centrality. "When, one is tempted to ask in sheer weariness," an exasperated E. A. Freeman wrote in a review essay of two more contributions to the ever-growing body of literature, "will any man be able to say the last word on that question of the West which bids fair to be as eternal as any question of the East, the question whether we, the English people, are ourselves or somebody else?"[45] Again, despite the variance, some general agreement existed. The modern Anglo-Saxon had come from sea-faring, freedom-loving peoples who had migrated from Northern Europe (though their original home was disputed) into the British Isles. Who among the ancestors, however, had contributed the largest, greatest, or most important share to the imperial nature of the Anglo-Saxon remained a point of dispute. Yet though a standard and mutually agreed-

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*Study in the Settlement of England and the Tribal Origin of the Old English People* (London: E. Stock, 1906; reprint, Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1971); Story, *The Building of the British Empire*; Longinus V. Rogers, *The Mystery Nation: Has the British Race A World Mission? A Vital Message to Every Citizen at Home and Abroad* (London: Alexaner-Ousley Co., 1926). See also J. George Godard, "The Burden of Empire," *The Westminster Review* 161 (February 1904): 178-87; G. F. Watts, "Our Race as Pioneers," *The Nineteenth Century and After* 49 (May 1901): 849-57; Oakley, "On Some French Appreciations of the Anglo-Saxon Genius," 73-82; Hon. W. J. Corbet (M.P., Delgary, Ireland) "English Ethics," *Arena: A Monthly Review of Social Advance* 22 (4: October 1899): 429-42; Professor O. B. Super, "Mission of the Anglo-Saxon," *Methodist Review* 72 [5th series vol. 6] (November 1890): 853-67.

[45]Freeman, "The Latest Theories," 36. Freeman posed this question on a number of other occasions: "Teutonic Conquest in Gaul and Britain: Two Lectures," *Four Oxford Lectures, 1887* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1888), 69; *The Chief Periods of European History, 6 Lectures, 1885* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1886), viii; "The Origin of the English Nation," 421.

upon image of or pedigree for the imperial Anglo-Saxon were never crafted, few people questioned the connection between British racial characteristics and the country's imperial destiny.

A number of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century writers directly addressed the racial nature and destiny of Britain. The Anglo-Saxon now controlled the preeminent position on the world stage. An emerging body of literature signaled a growing interest in the discovery of the reasons for and destiny of this racial supremacy.[46] The proposition that racial origins lay at the core of Anglo-Saxon supremacy became axiomatic. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* went so far as to contend that "the main interest in all recent British history, more particularly as that history bears on international politics at the present day and the national duties abroad, lies in the answer to the question, How was it that half an island over which Queen Elizabeth ruled developed into the world-wide empire over which Queen Victoria reigns?" While the authors of works posing similar queries often disagreed over specifics in their answers, most found themselves in general agreement that in order to sufficiently resolve the question, "first and foremost it must be referred to the qualities of the race, their energy and adventurous spirit, their capacity to colonize, to rule subject races, and administer their affairs. That race was

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[46]Super, "Mission of the Anglo-Saxon,"; Rev. George S. Payson, "Anglo-Saxon Supremacy," *Outlook* 53 (March 14, 1896); "Position of Britain in the World," *Spectator* 80 (March 5, 1898); Mills, "Which Shall Dominate--Saxon or Slav?"; George B. Waldron, "Five Hundred Years of the Anglo-Saxon," *McCLure's Magazine* 12 (November 1898); George Eedes Boxall, *The Anglo-Saxon: A Study in Evolution* (London: G. Richards, 1902); Dr. Karl Peters, *England and the English* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1904); Murray, *The Peace of the Anglo-Saxons*; George Eedes Boxall, *The Awakening of a Race, an Advance in Civilization* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1907); Homer Lea, *The Day of the Saxon* (London: Harper and Brothers, 1912); Brandt, *Anglo-Saxon Supremacy*.

sprung of successive seafaring invaders of these islands, who were trained for generations in the arduous defense of these shores."[47] "We are Imperialists," Sir John Walton confidently concluded, "in response to the compelling influences of our destiny. . . . We are, and shall be, Imperialists because we cannot help it. The argument may be digested thus, The energy of our race gave us empire." Race defined the empire's past and secured its future. "The basis of Imperialism is race. The spirit of the people which won the empire will never relax the grasp which holds it. Its genius will find scope on developing and, as duty or legitimate interest demands, extending its possession."[48] John Brandt, whose work was part of the "Human Personality Series," found the origin for supremacy in the "early environments of the Anglo-Saxons," which had "naturally inclined them to a sea-faring life and made many of them adventurers, travelers, traders and explorers who visited far-away countries largely for commercial purpose." Brandt concluded that,

> their descendants have inherited this trait of character and the natural inclination of the Anglo-Saxons, as they go around the world, is to plant colonies, which they foster and develop till they become centers of trade and influence.[49]

"The history of this race," remarked the Reverend George Payson, "its genius for government, its enterprise, and its devotion to civil and religious liberty, fit it for the noblest destiny."[50] The product of a uncurbable racial impulse, the empire represented the logical conclusion of a heritage stretching back for centuries.

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[47]"The Growth of the British Empire," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 366.

[48]Walton, "Imperialism," *Contemporary Review*, 306-7.

[49]Brandt, *Anglo-Saxon Supremacy*, 125.

[50]Payson, "Anglo-Saxon Supremacy," 474.

The race's unique heritage seemed to secure for the people of Great Britain an indisputable claim to world dominance. In a paper delivered before the Royal Historical Society in January, 1884, J. Foster Palmer asserted that the Saxon invasions, particularly, had done much in the elevation of the British race. "Of our mental qualities, " he declared, "we appear to derive from the Saxon our practical common sense, our business capacity, our power of adapting ourselves to circumstances, and what we may call in general terms that faculty of colonisation, thus including much that has tended to make our nation what it is."[51] The Oxford Professor and respected philologist and ethnologist John Rhys, writing in the *New Princeton Review*, confidently asserted that the racial features of the northern invaders of Britain were still discernible in the modern national character. This Nordic element was best represented, Rhys concluded, "by a well-known type of Englishman belonging mostly to the property-holding class." Such a man, Rhys continued, is brave, adventurous, a born soldier, has a restless energy, and possesses "the useful quality which the popular voice places among the virtues and calls pluck," all very imperial qualities.[52] The Anglo-Saxon's success was ultimately traceable to this racial specimen. Van Buren Denslow was even more specific as to the ancestry of the race's modern traits:

> from the Saxons, Angles and Danes the English blood may have drawn saving, trading and plodding qualities. From the original tattooing Britons, Silures or Welsh, Picts and Gaels they derived endurance and toughness under defeat. But how could

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[51]Palmer, "The Saxon Invasion and Its Influences on Our Character as a Race," 187-88.

[52]Rhys, "Race Theories and European Politics," 15.

> they escape deriving from four centuries of Roman admixture those dominating and legislative forces which made the modern British race successors to the Roman?[53]

By crediting the Romans with Britain's imperial strength Denslow was in opposition to the more generally accepted opinion that the Romans had never taken root in Britain and that imperial traits originated from the blood of the northern invaders.[54] These and similar attempts notwithstanding, it was largely unnecessary to pinpoint the exact origins of specific qualities or to particularize racial traits among the modern Briton's ancestors. The modern British race was undoubtedly the result of the mingling of many northern peoples who had each added certain imperial components to the mix. It seemed impractical, and ultimately immaterial, to match these tribes with their specific contributions. What was important was the fact the this racial combination was found nowhere else in the world, thus securing for Britain the title deeds to imperial glory.[55]

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[53]Denslow, "Are We Saxon or Roman?", 295.

[54]The connection between the Roman and British empires was an uneasy one. Though it was explicitly made a number of times, it never reached a position of any great importance. Rome was a rather unpalatable model since, it was commonly asserted, the Romans had held together their empire by the use of force. The British, however, held dominion by virtue of the good and moral government which had sprung from the race. While the Roman empire shattered to pieces, the Anglo-Saxon empire had a much more secure foundation. See Raymond F. Betts, "The Allusion to Rome in British Imperial Thought," *Victorian Studies* 15 (December 1971): 153, 158.

[55]Nicholas described this racial mixing as the laying of the "foundations of this great national superstructure." The combination of racial elements, tempered by environment and geography, had made the British people "not the envy, so much as the pattern and friend of all surrounding peoples, and [it] promises to continue for many ages [as] the exemplar and director, if not the virtual ruler of the civilized world. . . The English people by this admixture are possessed of all the attributes which are required for government--science, religion, the prosecution of trade, and the extension of empire." Nicholas, *The Pedigree of the English People*, 503-04.

The racial heritage of a people was the highest claim one could make in the contention for empire. The Professor of History at Queens College, London, J. A. Cramb explained it in this way. Though other peoples may exert their desire for imperial rule (specifically, the Boers of South Africa) they have not the racial nature to bring this to fruition. For, as Cramb explained, "the genius for empire in a race is like the genius for art in the individual, innate, but not innate in all. One has it, another has it not."[56] As a result of his unique racial heritage the Anglo-Saxon, of course, had been most generously endowed in this respect.

The Anglo-Saxon's racial confidence drew reinforcement from several foreign appreciations of his genius.[57] The German colonial administrator Dr. Karl Peters, while recognizing the many external advantages which had helped thrust Great Britain to such an exalted position, readily assured his readers that he was "fully aware of the great national qualities which lie at the bottom of the wonderful rise of the Anglo-Saxon race and their present predominating position on our planet."[58] The French traveler Paul Blouët, known most widely by his pen-name Max O'Rell, wrote several highly complimentary

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[56]Cramb, "Lecture III: 'The Development of the Religious Ideal' Tuesday, 22 May 1900," in, *Reflections on the Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain*, 112.

[57]Foreign appreciations of the Anglo-Saxon included: Emile Gaston Boutmy, *The English People: A Study of their Political Psychology*, trans. E. English (London: T. F. Unwin, 1904); N. Colajanni, *Latins et Anglo-Saxons: Races Superieures et Races Inferieures* (Paris: Alcan, 1905); Guglielmo Ferrero, *L'Europa Giovane: Studi e Viaggi nel paesi del Nord* (Milan: 1897); Georges Vacher de Lapouge, *Les selections sociales: cours libre de science politique, professe a l'Universite de Montpellier, 1889-1889* (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1896); M. Saroléa, *La Question Sociàle en Angleterre, et le Socialism Municipal, Lettre à M. F. Harrison* (1892); M. Max Leclerc, *L'Education des Classes moyennes et dirigeantes en Angleterre* (1894).

[58]Peters, *England and the English*, v.

works on the nature and extent of the British empire and the Anglo-Saxon race. "It is neither by his intelligence nor by his talent," O'Rell concluded, "that John Bull has built up that British Empire, . . . it is by the force of his character. . . .These Anglo-Saxons have an aptitude, a genius, for government inborn in them."[59] In 1897 the Frenchman Edmond Demolins published his highly controversial work, *Anglo-Saxon Superiority: To What is It Due?*[60] The book was widely read in France, reaching five editions in its first two months of publication. While never reaching as great a readership in English-speaking world, the implications of the book were widely debated throughout the Anglo-Saxon countries.[61] It is rather noteworthy that the use of the process referred to above as Othering in the creation of Anglo-Saxon identity is most evidently employed in this work written by a foreigner. Demolins set up a clear binary opposition between the British and the French and concluded that the Anglo-Saxon race had reached the point of supremacy because of its independent nature and the corresponding social structures which arose from it. Giving equal credit to racial character and cultural background in the creation of Anglo-Saxon superiority, his underlying agenda was to remedy the civilization of France

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[59]Max O'Rell, *John Bull & Co. The Great Colonial Branches of the Firm: Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa* (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1894), 314, 316.

[60]Edmond Demolins, *Anglo-Saxon Superiority: To What is it Due?*, trans. Louis Bert. Lavigne (London: Leadenhall Press, 1898).

[61]For a sense of some of the issues involved in this debate, see the following book reviews: *Review of Reviews* 16 (August 1897): 243-44; *Living Age* (December 4, 1897): 656-64; *Critic* 33 (November 1898): 389; G. B. Adams, *Book Buyer* 17 (1898): 194-96; J. D. Cox, *The Nation* 67 (October 13, 1898): 280-81; Frank A. Fetter, *American Academy of Political and Social Science. Annals* 14 (July 1899): 117-20; William Rice, *The Dial* (November 1 1898): 299-300; R. W. Shannon, *Canadian Magazine* 10 (1898): 289.

which he saw decaying under the Frenchman's 'communitarian nature.' Setting up this contrast between the two peoples, he hoped, might encourage his countrymen to change their ways, adopt British social policies, and assume their place along side the Anglo-Saxon. Recognizing that Desmolins was issuing "a call to France to be up and doing before it is too late," it becomes clear that he could not simply credit the inherited, and thus inimitable, characteristics of race.[62] Cultural and social factors, he hoped, at least might bear replication.

His Anglo-Saxon reviewers, however, concluded that Desmolins' work simply represented the wishful thinking of an envious Frenchmen. His appreciation of Anglo-Saxon genius, it seemed, "proceeds largely from the intrepid and half-pathetic hope that what is good in [the Anglo-Saxon] type of civilisation will bear transplanting, we may share this hope, though with less confidence."[63] Macnamara, in his anthropological survey, explained that by crediting Anglo-Saxon superiority to cultural and social structures Demolins was attempting to convince his French readers that they too could attain such a position by imitating the society across the Channel. This, he concluded, was all in vain. It was not their culture, Macnamara explained, which had thrust the Anglo-Saxon to the forefront of humanity,

> in our opinion the racial character of the Anglo-Saxon people has had more influence on their present position in the world, than their environment or any other cause. M. Edmond Demolins approves much of the system of education among the upper classes of the Anglo-Saxons. It seems to us that this system of education is rather the

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[62]S. L. Gwynn, "The Success of the Anglo-Saxons," *The Edinburgh Review* 187 (January 1898); 132, 136.

[63]Oakeley, "On Some French Appreciations of the Anglo-Saxon Genius," 80.

> result of the racial character of the Anglo-Saxons, than that their qualities are mainly attributable to the training which our youths receive.[64]

Indeed, one British review of Demolins' work stated bluntly, "the Anglo-Saxon race wins not because it has the most coal or the best natural frontiers, but because it has the best men. . . . If we were asked for the secret of the Englishman's success, we should reply that it is the nature of the beast."[65] Again, in the views of these readers, the superiority extended from the blood of the Anglo-Saxon. British cultural and social structures might be adopted by other races, probably to their ultimate benefit, but the essential and imperial nature of the Anglo-Saxon could not be duplicated. The history of the British as compared to other European empires clearly bore this out. If Demolins and other foreigners needed to analyze their own nations in terms of their difference from Britain there was little need for the British population to engage in a similar process of comparative inventory. The Anglo-Saxons needed not to look to others to define themselves, they were, in fact, the model to which their competitors seemed to aspire.

**The Dissemination of An Idea**

Beyond writings directly assessing the racial characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon, the belief in the imperial nature of the British race pervaded much of the contemporary literature on empire. There appeared to be common agreement that a discussion of the British race was an essential part of any reflection on the empire or the current condition of the world. In writings from across a broad political, social, and religious spectrum,

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[64]Macnamara, *Origin and Character of the British People* , 227.

[65]"The Superiority of the Anglo-Saxon," *The Spectator* 79 (September 18, 1897): 371-72.

from Conservatives, Liberals, and Labourites, jingoes and anti-imperialists, aristocrats and colonial administrators, this assumption appeared almost without question. Imperial expansion had assumed the nature of a racial imperative.[66] Rarely, however, did these works provide any type of developed racial analysis.[67] It was common to simply assert that racial origins and qualities lay at the core of imperial success. The conquest of the Indian subcontinent, for example, had been possible simply because of the British race's "inherent superiority." This superiority was a result of ancestral inheritance, the "section of mankind which dwelt in Britain had acquired, doubtless through the compulsion of heredity and environment, a far stronger and more energetic temperament than that which

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[66]MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, 5. See also Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Scmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840-1960* (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), chaps. 4-8.

[67]To give a list of even a representative portion of these works here would have little practical benefit. What follows is a highly abridged list of writings which approach the subject of the British Empire from a variety of viewpoints. Each, however, incorporates race into its analysis of empire. O. A. Howland, of Osgoode Hall Barrister-at-Law, *The New Empire: Reflections Upon Its Origin and Constitution and Its Relation to the Great Republic* (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1891; Toronto: Hart & Company, 1891): 578; J. Van Sommer, Jr., *Britain and Her People* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1893), 4; Sir Henry M. Stanley, "Anglo-Saxon Responsibilities," *Outlook* 63 (September 30 1899): 257-58; Ramsay Muir, *The Character of the British Empire* (London, 1917), 90. Review of 'Problems of Greater Britain.' By the Right. Hon. Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Bart. *The Quarterly Review* 170 (340: 1890): 527-58; Edwin D. Mead, LL.D., "The Expansion of England," *The National Geographic Magazine* 11 (July 1900): 248-63; A. C. Forster Boulton, "Liberalism and the Empire," *Westminster Review* 151 (May 1899): 486-91; Arnold White, "Britannia and the Colonist," *The National Review* 35 (1900): 635-45; William Laird Clowes, "American Expansion and the Inheritance of the Race," *Fortnightly Review* (1898): 884-92; Charles Gavan Duffy, "How British Colonies Got Responsible Government --Part I," *Contemporary Review* 57 (May 1890): 617-43; Edward Salmon, "The Crown and the Colonies," *The National Review* 14 (18989/90): 200 -07; Arthur Page, "Imperialism in the Future," *Blackwood's Magazine* 192 (October 1912): 431-45; V. Caillard, "An Empire in the Making," *The Monthly Review*, 18 (3: 1905): 30-64; "From the New Gibbon," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 241-49.

obtained in the Indian peninsula. As a result, they were the stronger people."[68] Since these imperial traits and instincts were inherited from 'ancestors' and 'forebears,' in a very real sense the empire was a racial bequest. As an aristocrat passed down his holdings and position to his progeny so did the Anglo-Saxon (as a member of a superior race) devolve both the material empire and the racial qualities necessary to maintain it upon the children of the race. More than simply being handed down from one generation to the next, the empire's legitimacy lay in its pedigree. From its origin, the race had proven itself the most worthy for the duties involved in imperial expansion and thus this expansion was unassailable.[69] This idea found stark confirmation in Walton's retort to inquiries as to why the British were imperialists. "As well ask," Walton contends, "the owner of an estate why he is a landlord."[70] The widespread repetition of this racial-imperial idea attested to, and undoubtedly contributed to, the power of the concept.

In his book *The Colonies and the Century*, the Hon. Sir J. Robinson, former Premier of Natal, made several references to the "instincts" which had helped form the

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[68]H. F. Wyatt, "The Ethics of Empire," *The Nineteenth Century* 41 (April 1897), 523. Wyatt had spent two years prior to the publication of this article on a lecture circuit charged with the "spreading of the Imperial idea amongst our countrymen." He was a member of a group of lecturers founded by Sir John Seeley for this purpose. It should also be recognized, however, that a number of people interested in imperial expansion, including Seeley, were suspicious about "racial superiority" of the Anglo-Saxons.

[69]The connection between racial ideology and the idea of aristocratic inheritance has been suggested by Benedict Anderson in his influential work, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2d ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 149-50.

[70]Walton, "Imperialism," 306.

empire.[71] The term 'instinct' seemed to be the favorite piece of racial vocabulary, probably because it invoked a supra-rational and biologically mandated action or course of action.[72] Quoting a paper he had delivered thirty years before to the Royal Colonial Institute, Robinson was convinced that the British race was impelled "by its own natural instincts to go abroad." Furthermore, the race has established, "in all zones, and by all seas, lands for its sons and daughters to occupy, where English institutions are established, where the English tongue is spoken, where the habits and customs of our race are reproduced."[73] The second chapter of Albert Frederick Pollard's edited work, *The British Empire: Its Past, Its Present, and Its Future*, entitled "Racial Factors and Their Fusion. B.C. 55--A.D. 1215" discusses the mingling of races in Britain from the Romans to the Normans.[74] Pollard, an Oxford University Fellow and Professor of English History at the University of London, edited this volume for the League of the Empire which included it in its series of works designed to increase information about and interest in the Empire. The presence and position of such a chapter suggests that the racial evolution of the modern British people was considered crucial to the history of the empire. Less

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[71]Robinson, *The Colonies and the Century* , 26-7, 52, 57, 79, 108.

[72]A particularly striking example of this is to be found in a lecture given by Sir Charles Lucas of the British Colonial Office in 1915 where he informed his listeners that the Britain's commercial success was to be explained by the fact that its people "sucked in the instinct of maritime enterprise with their mother's milk." Lucas, *The British Empire: Six Lectures* (London: Macmillan, 1915), 39. See also Rich, "The Long Victorian Sunset," 5-6.

[73]Robinson, *The Colonies and the Century*, 63.

[74]Albert Frederick Pollard, M.A., ed., *The British Empire: Its Past, its Present, and its Future* (London: League of the Empire, 1909), 19.

scholarly surveys were even more explicit in assigning the empire's growth to racial factors. Alfred Thomas Story's contribution to the widely popular "Story of the Nations" series endeavored, as the author stated, to "faithfully . . . present the story of the growth and development of the Empire from the moment when England, having been finally shut off from dominion on the Continent of Europe, began gradually, and at first with indifferent success, to grasp empire beyond the wider seas." The British race, according the Story, was driven to reach for imperial greatness not primarily out of vulgar economic necessity but "mainly by the blind instinct to be doing, coupled with an indomitable energy that could not be satisfied with mere existence."[75] In conclusion, Story maintained that, on the whole, "the enormous growth of the Empire during living memory has been one of manifest destiny--the result of inherent racial strength, rather than ambitious striving."[76]

Some of the clearest examples of this type of analysis are to be found in the historical accounts of the British Isles, particularly historical geographies and history textbooks. Authors of historical geographies closely connected the physical history of Britain to its racial development, and this, in turn, to its expansion during contemporary times. While geography was the paramount issue in these works, most attested to the idea of an important interplay between racial character and geographical considerations: the

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[75]Story, *The Building of the British Empire*, 1: vii. Story's appeal to racial nature may further be seen in the fact that for a number of years he edited a phrenological journal which interpreted the workings of the world in terms of racial makeup: *Phrenological Magazine: A Journal of Education and Mental Science*, 5 vols. (1880-89); also *Phrenological Annual and Record for 1888*.

[76]Ibid., 2: 436.

latter had played a significant role in the creation of the former. "The character of every state," Hereford Brooke George explained, "still more of every empire, must be greatly affected by geographical considerations, and this is pre-eminently true of the British empire, which is unlike any other that the world has yet seen. Her position on the globe, close to Europe yet separate from it, gave England the best opportunity for maritime and commercial greatness. And her people, thanks partly to the admixture of race which geographical influences had brought about, had the energy to make good use of their opportunities."[77] Edward Frederick Knight was more specific concerning the influences of geography upon the British race and on the corresponding characteristics which had created the empire. "That Britain has possessed herself of so large a share of the earth's richest lands, and has become the pre-eminently colonising Power," he states, "is due to a variety of causes, of which the following are the most important." The first, predictably, was geographical position. The second, he determined, were the qualities of the British race:

> a people of mixed blood, a blend of several strong races, [who] developed under their temperate climate into a hardy people, of strong physique, energetic, warlike, disposed to adventurous travel, and displaying the best seafaring qualities. They became keen and bold over-sea traders, and had the true colonising spirit, in as much as they were not content merely to exploit the resources of conquered territories, but made them a new home, settling permanently, and founding in them large Anglo-Saxon communities. The race, too, was a prolific one, so colonies were needed in the habitable regions of the earth for the settlement of a surplus population.[78]

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[77]George, *A Historical Geography of the British Empire*, 1.

[78]Knight, *Over-Seas Britain*, 3-4.

Here the racial imperative had been informed, it is true, by outside forces both historical and geographical, but in the end it found its fountainhead in the blood of the ancestors of the modern Anglo-Saxon. The empire's security was thus safeguarded in the strength of this blood. A more systematic and developed theory regarding the link between geography and race was advanced by the Oxonian Albert James Berry in his *Britannia's Growth and Greatness.* Berry describes the age-old cycle of race migrations brought on by geographical pressures. The most interesting of all these migrations, Berry concludes, "was the migration of the great Aryan race, which spread abroad its branches into India, Persia, and various parts of Europe . . . because it is the family to which the British belong." These migrations were followed by periods of settlement and rest, after which the "'swarming' was vigorously renewed." The collapse of the Roman Empire and the great invasions of the Norsemen represented further examples of these migrations and settlement. The British empire, however, was the most modern and most extensive of these migrations of race, "and it may be," concludes Berry, "that the Norse blood which was blended with that of the Anglo-Saxons at [the time of their migration] will account for the success which has attended the British efforts at colonization."[79] Formation of the race, undoubtedly influenced by geographical forces, remained central to any understanding of British history, especially to its rise and present hegemony.

Over and above his own scholarly pursuits, Albert Berry also served as the Director of Education for the city of Preston. This connection is significant as formal education, it seems, played a significant role in the furtherance of the imperial Anglo-Saxon idea.

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[79]Berry, *Britannia's Growth and Greatness*, 8-9.

Recent historiography has shown how powerful a force school texts exerted in the creation of racial attitudes.[80] While these analyses focus primarily on the presentation and perceptions of the races encountered throughout the empire, the process of racial imaging worked just as well in the creation of an Anglo-Saxon identity.[81] Famous for his work in the cause of Imperial Federation, George R. Parkin also authored *Round the Empire*, described as "an admirable text-book which had a wide circulation."[82] His richly illustrated book came complete with a "Foreword" by Lord Rosebery, a well-known imperialist who was also given to racial-imperial ideas. Feeling at home with the ideas of racial pedigree and aristocratic inheritance, Rosebery expressed his hope that Parkin's book would teach "the youth of our race . . . how great is their inheritance and responsibility ."[83] Parkin himself found racial descent at the core of Britain's expansion. "All through our history," he explained,

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[80]See Timothy J. Stanley, "White Supremacy and the Rhetoric of Education Indoctrination: a Canadian Case-Study," in *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism,* ed. J. A. Mangan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990): 144-62; Stewart Firth and Robert Darlington, "Racial Stereotypes in the Australian Curriculum: The Case Study of New South Wales," in *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience*, ed. J. A. Mangan (London: Routledge, 1993), 79-92; and Jo-ann Archibald, "Resistance to an Unremitting Process: Racism, Curriculum, and Education in Western Canada," in ibid., 93-107.

[81]A recent and very enlightening article on this process of building an Anglo-Saxon racial-imperial identity through common primary-school reading books is Stephen Heathorn, "'Let us Remember that we, too, are English': Constructions of Citizenship and National Identity in English Elementary School Reading Books, 1880-1914," *Victorian Studies* 38 (Spring 1995): 395-427.

[82]*Dictionary of National Biography* (1922-1930), s.v. "Parkin, George R."

[83]Lord Rosebery, preface to *Round the Empire--For the Use of Schools*, by George R. Parkin, vi.

> we may see how this spirit of roving and adventure seems to have been in our British blood. It brought our Saxon ancestors away from Germany across the North Sea to explore and fight and find new homes, and later it sent men like Drake, Raleigh, Cook, and Anson on strange enterprises all around the world. . . . This love of adventure sometimes tempts people to try very foolish things, but it has had a great deal to do with the spread of our race over the world.[84]

In the "Public School Historical Reader" series Sir James Hight's book, *The English As a Colonising Nation*, tied both the success and character of the British empire to the racial nature of the British people. Hight believed that his study would "clearly reveal several reasons for the political and commercial well-being of British colonies. In the first place Englishmen--and under this term we include all inhabitants of the United Kingdom--are especially fitted by nature to be a colonising nation."[85] The British, here racially homogenized into the term 'Englishmen,' possessed all the "qualities as necessary for a colonising race."[86] The volume on the British Empire in the "Raleigh History Readers" series did not fail to take race into account in its analysis. The author, Oxford scholar F. B. Kirkman, suggested that a glance back through history could help uncover some of the causes of Britain's success. One of these, he noted, is that "the British multiply exceedingly, and being by nature and by education self-reliant and enterprising, thousands of them have always been ready to quit their homes in order to hew for themselves elbow-room in other lands."[87]

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[84]Parkin, *Round the Empire*, 18.

[85]Hight, *The English as a Colonising Nation*, 19.

[86]Ibid., 20.

[87]F. B. Kirkman, B.A., Lincoln College, Oxford, *The Growth of Greater Britain: A Sketch of the History of the British Colonies and Dependencies* (London: Blackie & Son, 1898), 261-62.

The racial understanding of imperial success was no mere juvenile pedagogical tool. Though such a method of explanation may have helped younger students better comprehend British expansion, even advanced students were informed through their readings that racial qualities were closely linked to the formation of the empire. According to William Woodward, British history was composed of two great developments: the formation of Parliamentary government, and the expansion of the empire. Both of these, he argued, were the result of the same energy and self-reliance which characterized the "English race." Indeed, "the qualities of race which made the English a free people made them a colonising people."[88] Woodward's book, part of the "Cambridge Series for Schools and Training Colleges," went even further by explicitly stating the inevitable conclusion of the racially-based interpretation of imperial prowess. The British empire was not simply remarkable, it was unavoidable. Though all these authors avouched the inherent, and thus immutable, nature of Britain's imperial skill, Woodward directly asserted the predestined nature of British imperial growth. "British expansion," he explained, "has another quality; it is, in a sense, inevitable. This may be due to the race and its innate vigor; to geography; to maritime instinct; to permanent economic causes: it is probably the result of all of these. But it is there; it perhaps eludes explanation; it certainly needs no defense."[89] Inevitability, connoting the idea that whatever is, is right, removed imperial expansion out from the realm of condemnation.

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[88]Woodward, *A Short History of the Expansion of the British Empire*, 9. Widely used in higher education, Woodward's book went through at least four edition between the years 1899 and 1912.

[89]Ibid., 10.

The onus instead lay on explication; on discovering the "why" not the "how" of British imperialism.

In all of this, then, the shared theme of origins resounded. The empire was a product of the racial history of the British people. The race, by extension, was best understood by means of this ancestral inheritance. The identity created here was self-contained. All the points of reference, from the origins of the people themselves to the manifestation of their racial prowess, existed within the parameters of British history. The comparative process of Othering was at best an implied and secondary process. To know themselves the British looked not to people over the Channel or the oceans but across the gap of centuries. The early invaders of Britain, armed with all the qualities of a conquering people, were the "remote forefathers of the imperial race which, now one hundred and twenty millions strong, retains substantially the language, institutions and blood of those ancestors after the lapse of nearly two thousand years."[90] The impress of the race's origin upon its current position stood out in stark relief. The importance of race in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century understanding of the world cannot be overstated. The mid-century exhortation of the popular Edinburgh anatomist Robert Knox that "race or heredity descent is everything" had been taken to heart in the decades after his death.[91] Biological inheritance, then, could best explain the creation of empire.

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[90]James K. Hosmer, *A Short History of Anglo-Saxon Freedom: The Polity of the English-Speaking Race, Outlined from its Inception, Development, Diffusion and Present Condition* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1890), 2.

[91]Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (London: H. Renshaw, 1850), 6.

It did not, however, satisfy the need for a deeper meaning. The Anglo-Saxon's genius for empire, unparalleled by any other race of people, surely had its purpose.

**The Destiny and Divinity of Greater Britain**

The sense of destiny, often cloaked in religious overtones, which surrounded British expansion has been noted before by scholars.[92] The idea is of particular importance for this study as British-Israelism was nurtured by and took root in the soil of this religio-imperial mindset. One specific aspect of this mindset, and one which has not been given sufficient notice before, directly concerns us here. This mode of imperial thought was often, like Anglo-Saxonism itself, racially specific. The idea went beyond simply a sense that imperialism was, as Lord Curzon expressed it, "a preordained dispensation, intended to be a source of strength and discipline to ourselves and of moral and material blessing to others."[93] It was this, to be sure. To do the work of God in the world was one of the finest opportunities that imperial expansion offered. There is, however, a significant difference between doing the work of God and being His chosen people to undertake the task. Imperial advances, it seemed, had been the means by which God bestowed upon the 'backward races' of mankind the blessings of civilization and 'true religion'. In this endeavor several Western nations were taking part. As with expansion in general, however, the Anglo-Saxon was most nobly fitted for the task. Not only did the race oversee far more land and people than any other imperial contender, Anglo-Saxon

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[92]McDonald, *The Language of Empire*, 69, 83-88; Betts, *The False Dawn: European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, 19-20; Eldridge, *England's Mission*, chap. 9; Faber, *The Vision and the Need*, 122.

[93]George Curzon, "The True Imperialism," *Nineteenth Century* 63 (1908): 161-62.

civilization offered, so they believed, both good government and the Protestant faith: a combination no other people could claim. Truly God or (to use the more innocuous nineteenth-century term) Providence had a particular destiny in mind for the British race.[94] Others may take part in doing the work, but clearly the Anglo-Saxon had been especially chosen. "To us," wrote H. F. Wyatt, "to us, and not to others, a certain definite duty has been assigned. . . . To sustain worthily the burden of empire is the task manifestly appointed to Britain, and therefore to fulfil that task is her duty, as it should also be her delight."[95]

Few people at the time noted much difficulty in intertwining religious ideas with matters of race and world politics.[96] Sir J. Walton, for whom imperialism was fundamentally a function of race, expressed their ultimate compatibility. Walton approached his understanding of race and empire through the use of what he considered a developed formula; "a formula compounded," he explained, "of an emotion, a conviction, a determination, and a creed. It may be said that these are the elements of a liturgy or a cult and not a code of practical politics. I am not sure that these ideas are irreconcilable."[97] In a similar way, J. A. Cramb, Professor of Modern History at Queen's

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[94]Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos Press, 1990), 67-70.

[95]Wyatt, "The Ethics of Empire," 529-30.

[96]Payson, "Anglo-Saxon Supremacy," 474; Rogers, *The Mystery Nation: Has the British Race A World Mission?*, 6; "Anglo-Saxons and the Bible,' *The Spectator* 92 (March 12, 1904): 405; and Rev. Bernard Joseph Snell, *Sermons on the Boer War, 1899-1901: Preached at Brixton Independent Church, London SW* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1902).

[97]Walton, "Imperialism," 306.

College London, in his *Reflections on the Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain* proposed a new mode of speaking of the empire which would, he hoped, engender a true understanding of its nature. To fully comprehend this remarkable edifice one must search for the link between the race which created it and the spiritual purpose behind it. To this end, Cramb suggested that the term 'Imperial Britain' replace that of 'British Empire' because

> from the latter, territorial associations are inseparable. It designates India, Canada, Egypt, and the like. By 'Imperial Britain' I wish to indicate the informing spirit, the unseen force from within the race itself, which in the past has shapen and in the present continues to shape this outward, this natural frame of empire. With the use of this spirit, this consciousness within the British race of its destiny as an imperial people, no event in recent history can fitly be compared.[98]

Destiny, after all, underwrote all practical politics. Though government ministers might tinker about the edges, imperial progress was larger than any policy. Even attempts on the part of the government to curb expansion, Sir Samuel Baker contended, would come to naught. "Ministerial utterances," in Baker's view, counted little in the face of the Moirai for "inexorable fate determines our advance."[99] Anglo-Saxon expansion was loftier than the workings of the Foreign Secretary or Colonial Office. These were nothing but simple agents to watch over the race (though it did not always do so faithfully) in the working-out of its destiny.

For the empire to assume the mantle, as it increasingly did, of Providential destiny, the Anglo-Saxon's racial development must have also been part of God's design. It was

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[98]Cramb, "Lecture I: 'What is Imperialism?' Tuesday, 8 May 1900," in *Reflections on the Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain* , 6.

[99]Sir Samuel M. Baker, "Letter to the Editor," *Times* (London) 11 January 1884.

not necessary to ascribe the Anglo-Saxon's success to either racial strength or the favor of Providence, it could of course be due to both. Just as God had foreordained the British Empire it was only sensible that he would have caused there to emerge a race with the qualities necessary to serve as its trustee. As early as 1851, the congregational minister Benjamin Parsons saw the hand of God deeply involved in the creation of Britain's imperial race. His book, *The Greatness of the British Empire*, while not directly a religious text, placed the Divine at the center of Britain's imperial history, not a particularly surprising display since Parsons did have the "reputation of applying his pulpit to political purposes."[100] "The Anglo-Saxon," he asserted, "is pre-eminently the work of God; to the Eternal, and not to himself, belongs the praise of all that he has done which has been either really good or truly great."[101] Formed from historical forces shaping the nature of the race, the emergence of the Anglo-Saxon as an imperial people however was no accident of history. "In the elevation of any people," Payson reminded his readers,

> you require, before all things, physical and mental vigour; but these, we have shown depend much upon soil and climate; and it would be easy to prove that our island, in its very geological constitution, is eminently adapted to nourish and call forth an illustrious form of humanity. The volcano that was at work a million or a thousand millions of ages ago, was nothing but the agency of Divine benevolence.[102]

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[100]*Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. XV, s.v. "Parsons, Benjamin."

[101]Parsons, *The Greatness of the British Empire Traced to Its Sources*, 10. His book is the substance of lectures on English history delivered at Ebley, Stoud, and Cheltenham.

[102]Ibid., 5-6, 8-9.

The successive waves of invaders which formed the British people, furthermore, had been sent from God himself for a purpose which would reach fruition only centuries after they set foot on Britain's shores. The race that descended from those Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and Norman marauders had been able to establish itself in every part of the globe, according to Dr. Murray Moore, "because Providence has endowed us with the best qualities for colonizing of any nation."[103] These traits of character, in G. F. Watts' analysis, were indeed "those of a pioneering, enterprising people, adapting ourselves most naturally to differences of climate, not much bound by family or domestic ties or turning much to home--a questionable merit from a moral point of view, but marking us out for colonisation and as agents working for some future that we know nothing of and cannot foresee."[104] Racial evolution could be quite compatible with the Divine plan for nations. In fact, if the Providential reading of history were accepted then racial factors were often the means by which certain necessary ends were attained.

Great empires, Watts further noted, are only tools in the hands of God, for "one thing we may be certain of: if the Creator had any purpose in creation, all must be working to His will for definite ends, and man is only the agent."[105] Britain's imperial success then was "no gift shot into the nation's lap by Dame Fortune; it is due not to mere chance or accident . . . [but to] certain qualities in her island race . . . favoured by

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[103]Jesset, *The Bond of Empire*, 6.

[104]Watts, "Our Race as Pioneers," 854.

[105]Ibid., 849-51. See also Ernest D. Bell, "The Mission of Empire," *The Westminster Review* 154 (October 1900): 448.

Providence."[106] Of course Providence and history were not mutually exclusive. The facts of history were clear, even to the most religiously minded, that the Anglo-Saxon was a product of racial mixing and geographical influences. But the historical forces which had produced the modern British race were most certainly a directed combination. The history of the British nation was designed from the beginning to create a race of men who were worthy and capable of carrying out the "destiny manifestly imposed on us by Providence."[107] In an interview given in 1894, Sir George Grey, K.C., contended to have discovered the secret behind the evolution of the British race. "All of us, I suppose," Grey submitted, "recognise that there are certain great driving forces behind the march of humanity. We may not see them, or we may merely get a glimpse of them now and then, but they are there, and always in operation. Providence--that is my word. A principle line of these forces--the chief, I hold--we have in the evolution of the Anglo-Saxon race."[108] Racial history, at last, assumed Divine proportions. The contents of this understanding emphasized the biological as well as the transcendent. Imperial glory had not been simply bestowed haphazardly by God upon the British people. Rather, God had worked within racial realities to create a people worthy of the responsibility of empire.[109]

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[106]Meath, et al., *Our Empire*, 2: 3.

[107]Courthope, "The Society of the British Empire," 754.

[108]James Milne, "The Federation of the English-Speaking People: A Talk with the Right Hon. Sir George Grey, K.C.B." *Contemporary Review* 66 (August 1894): 194-95.

[109]The Bishop of Salisbury, speaking at his Cathedral on October 31, 1894, announced that the British people were the type of people God would best like to see perpetuated. "The extension of England," he contended, "was the natural outcome of the British spirit, and of that nature with which God has endowed them." *Wiltshire County Mirror and Express* 2 November 1894.

The empire was, at its core, a patrimony from the Divine. Like all patrimonies it was liable to the rules of inheritance principle among them being the restrictions of bloodline. Not uncommonly the extension of imperial dominion was spoken of as being "the greatest inheritance which Providence ever bestowed on a people."[110] The laureate of empire, Rudyard Kipling, understood this idea thoroughly. Assuming the language of the Old Testament, Kipling's "Song of the English" asserted both the inherited nature of the empire as well as the overlordship of the Almighty:

> Fair is our lot--O goodly is our heritage!
> (Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your mirth!)
> For the Lord our God Most High
> He hath made the deep as dry,
> He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the earth![111]

William E. Gladstone, a reluctant imperialist indeed, had remarked that he considered the British empire to be "a trust and function given from Providence as special and as remarkable as ever entrusted to any portion of the family of man." Such a gift could be regarded with nothing less than the greatest awe and most humble acceptance of its mandate. "I feel that words fail me," Gladstone continued, "I cannot tell you what I think of the nobleness of the inheritance that has descended upon us, of the sacredness of the duty of maintaining it. It is part of my being, of my flesh and blood, of my heart and soul."[112] Gladstone's statements are laden with ideas of corporeal descent and heritage.

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[110]Duffy, "How the British Colonies Got Responsible Government," 179.

[111]Rudyard Kipling, "Song of the English," as reprinted in George Griffith, *Men Who Have Made the Empire*, Frontispiece, viii.

[112]Jesset, *The Bond of Empire*, xv.

The British race, the most blessed 'portion of the family of man,' could rest assured in the knowledge that the empire was their divine birthright and that their race had been formed with all the qualities necessary to carry out the duties this inheritance entailed.

Faithfulness in the discharge of these obligations, however, had not been without its lapses. Anglo-Saxon expansion consisted by and large, it seemed, of fits and starts, at times the entire course of empire being imperiled by the mismanagement of its curators. Unlike Esau, however, the British race could not despise its birthright privileges. The day to day operations of the empire might seem confused and at times misguided but this did not forfeit the larger purpose. The underlying destiny of the race superseded individual miscarriages of duty. Though the empire was built up as part of the course of human history, the expansion of Britain, Lord Rosebery reminded his listeners in his famous Rectorial Address at the University of Glasgow, was "human and not wholly human, for the most heedless and the most cynical must see the finger of the Divine."[113] The empire builders and policy makers of the past were often quite unaware of the great destiny to which they were called. Unconscious of the design laid out for them, they had made many mistakes. But the empire survived, indeed, thrived in spite of it all. In surveying the history of the empire, James Little arrived at the following conclusion:

> As one studies the annals of the century, our crass stupidity in managing our imperial estates, and the marvelous way we have continued and prospered in spite of it all,

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[113]Rosebery, "Questions of Empire," *Times* (London), 17 November 1900; also re-printed or extensively quoted in: *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* 136 (2: February, 1901): 141-55; Meath, et. al., *Our Empire*, 1: 53; Jesset, *The Bond of Empire*, x-xii.

> almost compels one to accept the chosen-people doctrine. Surely a Providence has shaped our ends, rough hewn them to our own disadvantage though we have.[114]

The building of the empire had often been unconscious, but never unguided. The fact that the work was often so incremental and the end goal so enormous blinded many to the larger plan behind it all. Make no mistake, the Canadian Minister for Justice the Hon. David Mills warned, "there is a Divine purpose in the relative condition of states."[115] Naturally limited in their vision, the human observers of imperial history often saw a haphazard, sometimes criminal, process. "Our work is necessary even if, being experimental, it does not appear to be all for good." According to Watts, "we watch the minute-hand on the dial-plate, but we do not know the hour. We are but tools in the hands of the unthinkable Designer, for the working out of, to us, an unseen great purpose."[116] George Griffith was well aware that the building of the empire involved "the living man doing the living work which his destiny called him to do." He warned, however, that each empire builder "will not always be found of the best, nor the work, seemingly, of the noblest, but what I shall seek to show you is that the work *had* to be done in order that a certain end might be accomplished, and that the man who did it was, all things

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[114]Little's paraphrase of Hamlet (Act 5. sc.2) was echoed by many other authors on empire in the late-nineteenth century, Little, *Progress of the British Empire in the Century*, 77-78. The fact that the main editor of the *Nineteenth Century Series*, Reverend W. H. Withrow, M.A., D.D., F.R.C.S., who wrote a history of Canada for the series, also wrote the Introduction to the Reverend William H. Poole's *Anglo-Israel*, a central British-Israelite work, is suggestive of the close intellectual link between British-Israelism and imperial discourse.

[115]Mills, "Which Shall Dominate," 731, 739.

[116]Watts, "Our Race as Pioneers," 853.

considered, the best and, it may be, the only man to do it."[117] The larger plan of empire was not for man to fully understand. If it appeared random and unplanned, it was only because man's limitations made him unable to see the wider view. From its earliest history, the empire had been a planned edifice, not a haphazard construction. At the empire's inception "the world, in short, was on the eve of great and marvelous doings . . . it looked as though the Fates were preparing some gigantic miracle wherewith to astound mankind. And so, in sober truth, they were, and the miracle about to be wrought was the making of which we now call the British Empire."[118] Despite misdirected human intentions and inevitable failings which surrounded the building of the empire there had also been a perceptible "shaping of their rough-hewn purposes which led towards a perfected whole and which warrants the belief that

'The whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.'"[119]

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[117]Griffith, *Men Who Have Made the Empire*, xv.

[118]Ibid., 42.

[119]Berry, *Britannia's Growth and Greatness*, 304. Poetry was often used to express the Divine nature of the empire. For example Arthur Page, in "Imperialism in the Future" (page 445), expressed his view in the following way:

"Wider still and wider shall thy
bounds be set;
God, who made thee mighty, make
thee mightier yet."

See also Wilfrid Campbell, *Sagas of a Vaster Britain: Poems of the Race, the Empire and the Divinity of Man* (Toronto: Musson Book Co., Ltd., 1914).

Designed and directed by the Hand of God, the British race, and the empire which evolved from it, had a mission to fulfill--one important enough to survive the occasional and inevitable human errors which had colored its development.

The destiny of empire, emanating from the mind of God as it did, indicated a purpose greater than the transfer of capital, monetary and material gains, or even the laying of railroad tracks and telegraph wires. The purpose behind the empire had to reflect the divine nature of its origins. At times the rhetoric equated the empire's work with the mission of Christ, God's agent for the salvation of mankind. Brandt asserted that divine Providence had placed the Anglo-Saxon in all parts of the earth not only for the profane purposes of building lighthouses and warehouses, but "to open up dark places and let in the light; he is there to annihilate slavery, lessen poverty, drive out plague, pestilence and famine; he is there to promote happiness and increase the comfort of the people; . . . he is there to tell the story of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; he is there for the salvation of the human race and the glory of God."[120] This placed a burden upon the shoulders of the Anglo-Saxon which far exceeded the common Christian obligation of spreading the Gospel. The Anglo-Saxon had been bestowed with a mission tantamount to that of Jesus Christ, and, as with the case of Christ, a distinct racial element was present. The Savior of mankind could not have come from any other race than that of the Jews, having been, virtually from their origin, particularly selected to bring forth the Messiah. Though his message was designed for all the world, Christ's own origin was racially ordained. So too was the case with the Anglo-Saxon. Their

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[120]Brandt, *Anglo-Saxon Supremacy*, 239.

message and labors might benefit all of humanity, and yet their agency could be shared by no other race. "While on the one hand God seems to be preparing the Anglo-Saxon to take possession of his heritage," Professor Super explained,

> he is also preparing the nations for the reception of the truth, as he prepared them nineteen hundred years ago for the coming of his Son by an era of universal peace. May we not, with due reverence and humility claim to be God's chief instruments in bringing about the time of which Tennyson sings when "The war drum throbs no longer, and the battle flags are furled, In the parliament of nations, the federation of the world," as well as that more glorious time when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever?"[121]

Put simply, the mission of the Anglo-Saxon race was threefold: "to put down oppression and wrong, to bring about goodwill between the nations, and to keep the peace of the world."[122]

Though charged with the spreading of liberty, progress, and civilization throughout the world, above all Britain's mission was the establishment of "universal peace."[123] As the new Prince of Peace, the Anglo-Saxon was given the physical means to enforce this Christian mandate. United, the great Anglo-Saxon communities could exert the power

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[121]Super, "Mission of the Anglo-Saxon," 867.

[122]Meath, et. al., *Our Empire*, 1: 65.

[123]For examples of the various missions ascribed to the Anglo-Saxon race see the following works: Robinson, *The Colonies and the* Century; Murray, *The Peace of the Anglo-Saxons*; Henry Richard Fox Bourne, *The Story of Our Colonies* (London: James Hogg, 1869); Parkin, *Round the Empire--For the Use of Schools*; Sanderson, *The British Empire at Home and Abroad*; Troup, *Our Anglo-Saxon Empire*; "Ambassador Hay's Easter Speech," *The Critic*; "Review of 'Problems of Greater Britain.' By the Right. Hon. Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Bart.," *The Quarterly Review*; Alfred Berry, "The Loyalty of the Colonies." *Nineteenth Century* 28 (November 1890): 801-11; William Clarke, "Present Mood of England," *New England Magazine* 16 (August 1897): 690-96; Caillard, "An Empire in the Making;" Jose, "The Empire that Found Herself;" Mulhall, "Our Colonial Empire."

necessary to arrange such a peace. Tennyson's dream, quoted above by Professor Super, was invoked and shared by many others. The League of Nations and the modern United Nations find an intellectual predecessor in this concept of a federated Anglo-Saxon world. The British empire, especially a federated British empire, was a probable forerunner of that "federation of the world of which the poet dreams."[124] Professor A.V. Dicey likewise believed that, "the enforcement of the 'pax Britannica' throughout the British Empire and the maintenance of civilised order throughout the length and breadth of the United States . . . is the main service which the Anglo-Saxon race renders to civilisation." Furthermore, "an alliance of the two countries which combined together could always assert an effective command of the seas would permanently secure the peace of a large portion of the world."[125] All at once, the British race was both the master and the servant of all humanity. "The future of the whole world," Professor Oman declared, "lies in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race."[126] A burden of such weight had not been laid upon the shoulders of one people since the days of the Hebrew patriarchs.

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[124]Mead, "The Expansion of England," 262. See also Bourne, *The Story of Our Colonies*, 380; Little, *Progress of the British Empire in the Century*, xiv-xv; Cyril Ransome, *Our Colonies and India: How We Got Them and Why We keep Them* (London: Cassell, 1895), 100.

[125]A.V. Dicey, "A Common Citizenship For the English Race," *The Contemporary Review* 71 (April 1897): 467.

[126]C. W. Oman, Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford, *England in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1900), 261.

**As Israel of Old**

Rhetoric shrouded in the language of the Old Testament, especially the use of concepts like 'chosen race' and 'Divine covenant,' perhaps inevitably led to explicit comparisons between the Anglo-Saxon race and the other beloved race of God, the Hebrews. The correlation of Anglo-Saxons and Israelites, even allegorically, served as a middle ground between imperial rhetoric and British-Israelism. British-Israelites published many of the following passages as evidence that the British were slowly awakening to their true identity. Though this is doubtful, it certainly does indicate that by the end of the nineteenth century many in Britain had come to view themselves as a chosen people of the Hebrew type. The idea was especially pronounced among the religious. The Rev. Canon Ellison, M.A., Rector of Haseley and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, preached at Westminster Abbey in 1890 that "it is, I trust, in no spirit of national self-exaltation that I point to the striking parallelism which may be observed between the history of the English race and that of the Jewish race of which we have been speaking. England, like Judaea, a mere speck on the world's map--spoken of in the time of the Romans as 'almost cut off from the world'-- a signal instance of the law of God's Kingdom that 'He chooses the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty'--England has been brought, as Judaea was, to a position of signal pre-eminence among the nations."[127] The assumption of Hebrew imagery, in some measure, represents a method of identity formation similar to the comparative process spoken of above as "othering." It employed the perceptions of and ideas surrounding a clearly foreign people

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[127]Rev. John Henry Joshua Ellison, "England's Witness--in Africa," *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record* 15 (July 1890): 437.

to illuminate, assign, and explain the position of the race in question. There is, however, an important distinction. This mode of thought was not based upon opposition but upon similarity, it was less about othering than about modeling. The Anglo-Saxon was a new, perhaps improved, type of Hebrew assuming the most important of the Hebrew's traits. Though foreign in race, the Hebrews were clearly Britain's precursors in mission. For this reason, the most instructive elements which they could derive from studying God's ancient people were those which might highlight the congruity, rather than dissimilarity, between the two races.

The imperial mandate bestowed upon the Anglo-Saxon race served as the clearest sign that it had succeeded to Israel's original calling. Modeling British imperialism upon the story of God's bestowal of grace and bounty on Israel extended back to the early days of expansion, appearing widely in writings promoting colonial endeavors as early as the seventeenth century. "There is hardly any early modern colonizing text in English that does not," it has recently been noted, "appeal to the master narrative of Israel in Canaan. . . . This appeal is not so much an accidental as a defining characteristic of early modern colonial discourse."[128] The nineteenth-century extension of this discourse found one of its earliest voices in the popular preacher and religious author, the Rev. Edward Budge. Even before expansionist rhetoric began to crescendo after 1870, Budge believed Britain's ascendancy to be one of the world's most important developments. To fully understand it, he concluded, it may be profitable to both search the Scriptures and to look back across the centuries. "It is manifest that Israel was chosen and selected as a race

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[128]Paul Stevens, "'Leviticus Thinking' and the Rhetoric of Early Modern Colonialism," *Criticism* 35 (Summer 1993): 452.

whose office it was to stand forth before a corrupt world as the heir of a special light," Budge wrote. As Israel in their sins had forsaken their office as "the herald of God's mystic truth and revealed righteousness to all mankind" it was now safe to assume that "England is to occupy their place in relation to the world at large. England has thus succeeded to a measure of Israel's original destiny, and Israel's original hopes. What Israel was in Canaan in its covenant relationship with God, and with the external world, Great Britain is now, . . . the covenant gifts bestowed of old upon Israel, and many more besides, have become ours; and this that we might do Israel's work."[129] The office of God's agent in the world had thus been effectively transferred.

In the successive uses of this imagery there is a noticeable introduction of the concept key to nineteenth-century imperial rhetoric, that of race. Once again, the biological and transcendent became intertwined as the exclusivity of bloodline entered into the discourse around God's dispensation. "That God should choose one nation for a special mission, and therefore favor it above all others, is not an unheard of thing in his dealings with men," Professor Super noted. The Hebrews, having once been this chosen people, held their place absolutely. Once it was forfeited however, it did not then dissolve upon the entire human race or even upon the whole body of Christian believers. But rather "there are good reasons for believing that to the Anglo-Saxon has passed the privilege as well as the responsibility of civilizing as well as Christianizing the world."[130] The Dean

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[129]Rev. Edward Budge, *Posthumous Gleanings from a Country Rector's Study*, ed. Rev. R. B. Kinsman (London: Rivingtons, 1866).

[130]Super, "Mission of the Anglo-Saxon," 865. For virtually the same message see Rev. Joshua Charles Solomon Kroenig, A.K.C., *England's Divine Mission in the East, or, England's Identity with Israel Proved. A Special Sermon, Preached in St. Barnabas Par-*

of Canterbury commented that the book of Daniel seemed to speak of the rise and dominance of the British race and of them alone. "We may venture to say," he proposed, "that the reason why God has given this race its rapid increase, its dominance in both hemispheres, and its vast influence, is because God has appointed it to be His instrument for setting up throughout the world of that universal monarchy 'which shall never be destroyed, and of which rule shall not be left to another people.'"[131] The preeminence of the race, George Waldron suggested, indicated nothing less than that "the blessing promised to Shem seems destined to receive its fulfillment on the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon."[132] When the Hebrews ceased to be the chosen *race*, God legitimated this racial exclusivity by choosing another, and only one, to take their place.

The racial formation of the British, their traits and their origin from the invaders of the north, also signaled important parallels with Israel of old. In a springtime sermon in the Cape Town cathedral of St. George's, the Rev. F. J. Tackley broached this subject under the heading "The English Race: Blessed and Blessing." The newspaper that printed his sermon highlighted the fact that Tackley "saw a great resemblance between the Jews, that noble, but unfortunate race, and our race, which was perhaps equally noble, but which under God's providence and grace had been more fortunate. Originally, both races

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*ish Church, Hull, on Sunday Evening, November 24th, 1878.* Printed by Special Request of the Church Council (London: S. W. Partridge, 1879), 12.

[131]Very Rev. Robert Payne Smith, D.D., Dean of Canterbury, *Daniel I.-IV.: An Exposition of the Historical Portion of the Writings of the Prophet Daniel* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886), 91-92. By far the most common interpretation of this passage of Scripture was that this exalted place was to be granted to Israel in the last days. Dean Smith had thus replaced Israel with Britain.

[132]Waldron, "Five Hundred Years of the Anglo-Saxon," 185.

were wanderers on the face of the earth, and both the Anglo-Saxon race and the Jews were deeply religious." The Anglo-Saxon, similar to the Jew in these important ways, could rightfully claim to be God's chosen people. Their history had allowed them to be selected by God "for the same purpose as He chose the Jewish race."[133] Racial characteristics were the hallmarks of both Israel's and Britain's status. "You say that Israel had a special mission," the Rev. Dr. Watson pronounced at the Wesleyan Anniversary celebrations in 1900.

> And are any man's eyes so blind that he cannot see the mission of England; have not we been surrounded by the sea, our national character formed for the purposes that we can recognise? What nation has ever planted so many colonies, explored so many unknown lands, added such practical contributions to civilisation, set such illustrious examples of liberty! Within our blood is the genius for government, the passion for justice, the love of adventure, and the intelligence of pure faith."[134]

Rev. Watson acknowledged that "the Jewish stock came of our Lord, and therefore that people must have a lonely place." The Anglo-Saxon race, however, formed with all the qualities necessary to carry out their mission must be considered to rank among them since Israel and Britain were "God's chosen people of ancient and modern times."[135] The Colonial Anglo-Saxon was much akin to the Jew and much his successor in his loyalty to his race, the readers of *The New Review* were told. "The spirit [of loyalty] lives now, not in the Chosen People, but in us, the Imperial-born children of the English." Much as the Israelites regarded Canaan, the author suggested, so did the colonials look to the "Mother

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[133]"St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town.--A Contrast of Preachers," *Uitenhage Times* (Cape Town), 29 April 1899.

[134]Rev. Dr. Watson, "Comfort For England," *The Christian World Pulpit*, 7 March 1900.

[135]Ibid.

Country." To take such a sentiment lightly was to make a terrible mistake, for it was ever becoming clearer that this loyalty was "the motive-power destined to give practical expression to the noblest ideal which has ever inspired a nation--the union of the scattered peoples of the British Empire."[136] It was within the Anglo-Saxon's 'Israelitish' qualities, then, that lay the best hope for the future of the race. "I believe God's Israel to-day are the Anglo-Saxon race," wrote the Rev. J. Edmonds in his prize-winning essay for the Montreal *Daily Star*. "God's favour and protection have made them what they are. He has endued them with special gifts and powers of mind and body that distinguish them from all other people on the face of the earth. He has made them an imperial race--a conquering, colonizing race."[137] The Anglo-Saxons had not only taken on Israel's mantle, they had been racially formed to be worthy to do so. The British people, professor James K. Hosmer wrote, were the only race which could truly understand and carry out its "sacred" mission. Should that race disappear, the chances for the freedom, peace, and success of the world would be small. Anglo-Saxons, he contented, "are the Levites to whom, in especial, is committed the guardianship of this ark, so infinitely precious to the world."[138] As it was with Israel so it was to be with the Anglo-Saxons; the assignment of God's special grace and important tasks were both racially determined and racially exclusive.

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[136]C. de Thierry, "England and Her Colonies," *The New Review* 16 (1897): 437-38.

[137]Rev. J. Edmonds, "First Prize Essay," *Daily Star* (Montreal), 14 April 1897.

[138]Hosmer, *A Short History of Anglo-Saxon Freedom*, 308.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, correlating the promises made to Israel with the current position of the British had become a popular and powerful image. "It is true that Israel had a mission," Rev. Bernard Snell asserted in his defense of the Boer War, "so has England a mission."[139] J. G. Godard, in his chastising work on imperial thought entitled *Racial Supremacy: Being Studies in Imperialism*, remarked on how easy such an idea was accepted by the general populace. Godard bemoaned the pride, or 'amour propre', that imperialism entails, and which, once aroused by politicians, had caused the British population to exclaim, "Are not we a chosen race, the modern Israel, called of God going forth conquering and to conquer?"[140] Despite Godard's contention, the idea was not just the tool of politicians or the rhetorical excess of a few stray clergy. Some of Britain's leading churchmen found good use in employing this Israelitish imagery. Every person in Britain should rejoice in the glorious imperial future of the race, the Rev. Dr. Lightfoot, Bishop of Durham and one of the most important late-Victorian religious figures, explained. Such a vision of grandeur should be as important today "as a similar vision was to every devout Israelite of old."[141] The model of Israel was an impor-

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[139]Snell, *Sermons on the Boer War*, 46. In his series of lectures on the Boer War, J. A. Cramb furthered this contention by asserting that the mission of the Anglo-Saxon was analogous to the mandate issued by the Sinai God to the Hebrews. Cramb, "Lecture VII: 'The Destiny of Imperial Britain and the Destiny of Man' Tuesday, 10 July 1900," in, *Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain*, 315.

[140]Godard, *Racial Supremacy*, 9-10, 160. The book is an expansion of a series of articles published in the *Westminster Review*.

[141]Right Rev. Joseph Barber Lightfoot, Bishop of Durham, "Inaugural Address, Wolverhampton Church Congress, 1887," *Times* (London), 4 October 1887. The Bishop of London, in his Presidential Address to the Missionary Conference of the Anglican Communion, explicitly compared the history of the Jews with that of the British and contended that in the same way as the Jews, the "English race . . . were marked out by

tant one. It bespoke of Divine grace and special dispensation. Its application to imperialism, seems, in fact to have been a very natural one. Through its employment Britain's world dominance found Providential security and, more importantly, theological precedent.[142] Its contribution to British identity fell directly in line with the imperial mindset, it supplied an image of the British people both substantive and racially specific.

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God's providence, by the gift of opportunities not granted to others." See *Times* (London), 31 May 1894. For similar remarks made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a sermon on the Empire see Major-General Charles Arthur Hadfield, 1st President BIWF, *British Israel Facts not Fancies: A Rudimentary Guide for Students of the Subject*, with a Foreword by the Rt. Rev. The Lord Bishop of the Falkland Islands. (London: British-Israel World Federation, 1920), 11.

[142]The natural extension of this idea of theological precedent was that of prophetic design. Israel's place in God's design for the world had been detailed in the prophecies. Britain, the most important nation for the furtherance of God's plan since the days of Israel, surely also had a place in the elucidation of the prophets. A number of religious writers concluded just this and proposed that the Britain of modern times was none other than the 'Tarshish' of prophecy. The nation of Tarshish (a nation of merchants), according to the prophecies, was to assume cast-off Israel's duties in the final days and be instrumental in the rapprochement between God and his ancient people. For examples of this interpretation see: Parsons, *The Greatness of the British Empire*, 16; *Destiny of the British Empire As Revealed in Scriptures* (London: William McIntosh, 1865); Dr. John Thomas, *The Destiny of the British Empire as Revealed in the Scriptures. Compiled Chiefly from the Writings of Dr. Thomas* (London: G. J. Stevenson, 1871), esp. 8-9; Professor R. Hall, M.B., *Signs of the Times. England's Mission. Russia's Destiny and Final Overthrow. The Whereabouts of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.* 2d ed. (Melbourne: Griffith & Spaven, 1878), 11; Kroenig, *England's Divine Mission in the East*, 9; Dr. Bright, "England and the Prophetic Tarshish," *The Christian Herald and Signs for Our Times* 29 October 1890; Henry Sulley, *Pentalethia: Britain in Prophecy; or, the Development and Destiny of the English-Speaking Race: Being a Series of Lectures Delivered in the British Colonies and the United States in the Years 1899 and 1900* (London: S.W. Partridge & Co., 1904). Henry Brittain, accepting the Tarshish interpretation, made an unconscious foray into British-Israel thought by maintaining that the people of Prophetic Tarshish (Britain) were to have descended from the same race as the people of Israel. Brittain, F.A.S., *The Origin and Destiny of Britain* (W. H. Guest, 1884), 43; see also, Thomas, *The Destiny of the British Empire*, 8.

These explicit comparisons between Israel and Britain indicate how closely British-Israel thought reflected the more mainstream interpretations of British imperial success. The quest for predecessors, biological and symbolic, were here merged. Whereas contemporary rhetoric found biological ancestors in the northern tribes of Europe who, as the modern Anglo-Saxons, could be fairly considered the new Chosen People, British-Israelism retained the biological focus throughout. The distinction between the two, understandably, was often blurred. So close was the resemblance that some who spoke of Britain's destiny in these terms thought it necessary to first distance themselves from the claims of British-Israelism. In a speech to the London Missionary Society, the Rev. Samuel Hebditch explained that,

> I am not an Anglo-Israelite, but I believe that God in His providence is giving to the Anglo-Saxon race the same position in modern times as He gave the Israelitish race in times long ago. Is it not true, that as the Anglo-Saxon race expands, the Kingdom of God expands? Is it not true, that wherever English people are settled, there is a new altar for God, a new light held out, a new testimony borne?[143]

Rev. Kroenig, in spite of the fact that his sermon title indicated that "England's identity with Israel" was proved, was forced to explain that though much "has been said and written of late on the identity of the English people with . . . the lineal descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel," this was simply not the case. "There is not a shadow of Scripture evidence by which the lineal descent of the English from the lost ten tribes of Israel can be vindicated." Rather, in Kroenig's view, they were simply the nation to whom the promises were to be given after Israel's rejection of Christ.[144] A similar caveat was is-

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[143]*Christian World*, May 1882; quoted in *Banner of Israel* 7 (1882).

[144]Kroenig, *England's Divine Mission in the East*, 15. Kroenig entered into a spirited debate with the British-Israelites through the medium of one of their journals. They

sued by Rev. J. Ossain Davies. "We cannot accept the Anglo-Israel theory in all its fulness," he decided, "and yet we firmly believe that Great Britain has been most highly favoured--'He hath not dealt so with any other nation.' We have been given our unique position not for the purpose of self-aggrandizement but in order to be God's prophets to the world. We are more than mere traffickers--we have been set apart by high heaven for a great and peculiar work."[145] The British-Israel theory simply took this type of rhetoric to its next level, being, in essence, more racially coherent. The grace bestowed upon the people of Israel, British-Israelites contended, was to endure forever. It was neither revocable nor transferable. If the British race now enjoyed the place of ancient Israel (as they surely did) they must then indeed be of the race of Israel. Emphasizing the exclusivity of blood and the racial contingency of inheritance, the British-Israel interpretation echoed, much more faithfully, the racial nature of much contemporary imperial rhetoric.

Such assertions of a Divine mission, of a Israelitish destiny, and of a special place among the peoples of God, however, tended to confuse British-Israel thought with the ideas of people who simply made an analogous connection between the two peoples. It is not surprising, in this case, that the distinction between them was not always observed. The conversion of Walter Metcalf Holmes Milner to British-Israelism is an instructive

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had referred to his work as an indication of the knowledge of their descent slowly being revealed to the population. Kroenig, for his part, denied that his work lent any truth to British-Israelism. See F. W. Phillips, "England's Greatness," *Israel's Hope and Destiny. A Monthly Magazine Advocating the Identity of the British People With the Lost Ten Tribes* 31 (March 1882): 81-82.

[145]*Examiner*, 18 May 1905; quoted in, *Banner of Israel* 29 (November 8, 1905): 463.

example of how the common practice of speaking of Britain as the modern Israel often led to the acceptance of the Identity theory. While on holiday from his studies at Queen's College, Oxford, Milner came across a pamphlet entitled *The Coming Collision Between England and Russia* on his father's desk. [146] He read the pamphlet with interest and came to discover that the author, styled simply as 'M.A. of Cambridge,' was the son of his father's friend,

> but I did not know who it was until I was convinced he was right - and right in much more than merely his main contention, for he said that he believed that the *Israel* of Prophecy was *Britain*! . . . Curiously enough, in subsequent conversations with the author, I found that he did not really after all see that we were Israel, only that God was 'pleased to look upon us' *as* Israel![147]

Milner, however, who until this time had considered Britain's identity with Israel "impossible," was now convinced of the actual, not simply allegorical, identity between the Anglo-Saxons and the lost Israelites. He went on to become one of the most important writers and researchers in the Identity movement. Such misinterpretations also extended beyond the Channel. In the midst of the enthusiasm surrounding Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Rudyard Kipling presented to the Queen his imperial hymn, "Recessional." Kipling, who "more perhaps than any other living man, has been identified with pride of Empire and with confidence in the destinies of our race," laded his offering with a deeply

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[146]M.A. of Cambridge, *The Coming Collision Between England and Russia, Predicted by Ezekiel, Chapters XXXVII. and XXXIX. Forming a Proof of the Identity of England With the Israel of Prophecy* (London: W. H. Guest, 1879).

[147]Rev. W. M. H. Milner, M.A., *Covenant People* (March 1916).

religious and Old Testament tone.[148] While the London papers found this to be an important reminder of the "spiritual as well as the material side of national greatness" the French *Revues des Deux Mondes* saw something quite different.[149] Kipling's hymn, here decried as a "so-called religious song [which] will remain forever as a monument of immeasurable pride," also convinced that author of the widespread belief in Britain, "that the English are descended, as according one tradition, from the Lost Tribes of Israel."[150] The misconstruing of religious-imperial rhetoric as British-Israel theory had become so acute by 1917 that the German paper *Bremer Burgenzeitung*, in a war-time propagandist analysis of the British imperial mindset, reported that, "the religious ideology which assigns to the descendants of Abraham the sovereignty over the entire world plays a most important part in the political education of the English people. The view that the British are descended from the Lost Ten Tribes, and are therefore chosen by God to be the rulers of the world, permeates nearly every section of the nation."[151] It became increasingly

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[148]For more on Kipling's use of Old Testament language, as seen above in his 'Song of the English,' see MacDonald, *Language of Empire*, 152-55, and Walls, "Carrying the White Man's Burden," 29-36.

[149]*Times* (London), 17 July 1897.

[150]"L'Armée Anglaise Printe Par Kipling," *Revue des Deux Mondes* (Paris), 1 April 1900. Another, and earlier, French assessment of the imperial foundation of British-Israel thought is found in Victor Garien's review of Lady Caithness' British-Israel book, *Les Vrais Israelites*. "The English," Garien noted, "trample on the rights of other nations, and aspire, wherever they find themselves, to reign supreme. This may be Israelitish, but is it the work of God?" "The True Israel," *La Nouvelle Review* (Paris) January 1891; reprinted in *The Literary Digest* (New York) 2 (January 31, 1891): 16. See also, *Pall Mall Gazette* (London), 14 January 1905, wherein an article remarks on a French writer's interpretation of British imperialism as an outgrowth of British-Israelism.

[151]"Through German Spectacles," *Daily Express* (London), 23 June 1917.

difficult to discern where mainstream imperial discourse ended and British-Israel teaching began.

The destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race, mirroring as it did the future promised to Israel, served as an important ingredient of the racial-imperial identity of Britain. Ascribing a specific and, in this case, a particularly glorious destiny to the Anglo-Saxon gave further clarification of what it meant to be a member of the British race. Moreover it was, in effect, the corollary to the quest for origins. While the establishment of racial origins might explain from whence the empire came and drew its strength, the assertion of this destiny helped to determine in what direction the race was headed. The empire bridged the temporal gap between what had been and what was to come; it supplied a vista point from which the entire history of the race, both past and future, could be observed. "This one living generation of British men and women, who now walk this world's stage, does not constitute the whole British people," Wyatt explained. "Far back into the past, and, surely, far forward into the future, the chain, of which we are only one link, extends. Inheritors of a mighty trust, we are bound by the whole course of our history, up to now, to pass it on, inviolate, to those who shall follow."[152] In sum, imperial expansion had sprung from the original impulses of the race; the British, true to their racial nature, were destined to carry the empire and the whole world with it to a level of peace and prosperity never before seen.

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[152]Wyatt, "Ethics of Empire," 529.

**Conclusion**

In the years after 1870, at the height of imperial enthusiasm, the ancestors of this 'British race' came under greater notice. To explain the present grandeur of Greater Britain appeal was to be made to the past. By this was understood something more than the simple contention that contemporary events are rooted in their history. It implied that there was a direction underlying all British history, a destiny shaped in large measure by the qualities of the race. Anglo-Saxon hegemony was less the result of a series of happy accidents than the culmination of a racial history with which none could compare. The barrister and linguist Herbert Bruce Hannay, though taking this idea to its extreme, nevertheless echoed the themes of much current opinion in his writings. In his study, *European and Other Race Origins*, Hannay hoped to show that long before the present inhabitants of Great Britain, the Colonies, and America were known as "English" they had "sustained a leading *rôle* in the Drama of the Past . . . [and that] there has hardly been an age in which, under the guise of one name or another, well known in history, some branch of their race has not held a prominent, nay, even dominant, position in the affairs of the Nations of the World, great or small."[153] Hannay had been highly influenced by British-Israel ideas, yet his book, though dismissed by his reviewers, worked broadly within the racial parameters and ethnological research established over the last fifty years. More importantly, it addressed the common themes spoken of in much imperial rhetoric. The ideas of racial exclusivity, biological inheritance, and imperial mission formed the basis

[153]Herbert Bruce Hannay, Esq., *European and Other Race Origins* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Co., 1915), xxxv.

of his work. "Thus, then," he contended, "we shall have ample reason to conclude that the Leading Peoples of Europe--and especially the British--were in antiquity, both racially and politically, the Aristocrats of that East of which even today they--and especially the British--are the Overlords and Trustees."[154] Hannay's attempt to magnify the history of the British race, a practice which even his critics conceded "has been by no mean uncommon" among nations, was not made in pure vainglory.[155] Rather its central purpose was, by using as much knowledge and supposition as could be gathered regarding the origin of the race, to explain Anglo-Saxon dominance and suggest its inviolability.

The imperial experience wielded a powerful influence over the formation of British identity. It served as both the impetus behind and confirmation for a racial understanding of the Anglo-Saxon world as a whole. As the leading agent in the civilization of the world, the Anglo-Saxon could take great pride in his accomplishments, his pedigree, and his progeny. The lack of complete agreement on the precise ancestry of the British race, either in scientific or popular circles, did not affect the importance of racial traits or biological origins in the assessments of imperial successes. In fact, the disagreement afforded the quest for origins a good measure of flexibility, not in the least allowing for scientific consideration of the British-Israel proposition.[156] British-Israelism, in fact, could

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[154]Ibid. Of particular note, in speaking of the 'leading peoples of Europe' Hannay deliberately excluded the modern Germans. He also sought to prove in his work that alleged blood relationship between the British and the Germans "has no basis whatever in Truth."

[155]Review of *European and Other Race Origins*, by Herbert Bruce Hannay, in *English Historical Review* 32 (January 1917): 147.

[156]The British-Israel thesis was debated on at least two occasions before the London Anthropological Society. Though most of the attendants did not accept the theory in the

offer a more definite answer to the questions surrounding imperial identity. Angles, Saxons, Celts, Jutes, Frisians, Normans--it made no difference what proportion of the population was which. All were of the House of Israel; all were Hebrews. The racial homogenization found in much Anglo-Saxonist thought (cf. E. A. Freeman) received its completion in the British-Israel theory. Moreover, the British-Israel thesis allowed, in fact it demanded, a rapprochement between the biological and mystical foundations of empire. "The mystical appeal of Imperialism" Richard Faber has noted, "must, of course, escape, and can easily survive a detached analysis."[157] British-Israelites tapped into this appeal, and though they did not attempt 'detached analysis' they did endeavor to bring to bear the power of racial ideas on this feeling of imperial destiny. Britain's imperial identity rested upon discovering an origin for the race which could effectively account for its achievement; a success of almost mythical proportions. The secret of British-Israelism's appeal lay in the fact that it was eminently able to undertake such a task.

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end, the fact that they allowed it to be debated at all before their members indicates not only the importance of the question of racial origins but also the ability of British-Israelites to take advantage of scientific disagreement to advance their theories. See A. L. Lewis, "The Alleged Identifications of the English Nation with the 'Lost House of Israel': A Paper Read Before the London Anthropological Society on Tuesday, 2 November, 1873, Dr. R. S. Charnock, F.S.A., President, in the Chair," in, *Anthropologia: In Which Are Included the Proceedings of the London Anthropological Society* 1 (1873-75): 185-97; also, C. O. Groom Napier, F.G.S., Member of the Anthropological Institute, "Where are the Lost Tribes of Israel? A Paper Read Before the London Anthropological Society on 9 April, 1875, Dr. R. S. Charnock, F.S.A., in the Chair," *Leading the Nation to Glory by Our Identification With Lost Israel: A Weekly Journal*, 1 (Nos. 18, 19, 20: 1875): 137-47, 149-60, 161-63. Dr. John Beddoe had even agreed to read Groom Napier's paper before presentation and had offered his own suggestions.

[157]Faber, *The Vision and The Need*, 122.

## CHAPTER TWO

## THE BRITISH-ISRAEL IDENTITY

The primary objective of most British-Israelites was to establish a clear and glorious identity for the Anglo-Saxon race rather than to conduct a diligent and earnest search for either the true ancestry of the British or the fate of the lost tribes. A superficial, though telling, indication of this is that the theory was widely known as simply the "Identity," not the "Origin" or the "Ancestry." A more substantial argument in favor of this interpretation lies within the method behind the creation of the Israelitish identity itself. Over and above its substance, the very machinations of this quest for identity were peculiar. From at least the time of the theory's modern inception in 1840, it was strictly an *a priori* identification in that the end result was ordained from the start. While stress was laid upon the genealogical roots of the British race, British-Israelism exerted relatively little effort in tracing this descent step by step. Rather, it began with the confirmed view that the British were racial Israelites and thus it concentrated on finding every piece of evidence which might substantiate this supposition. The conclusion was reached before the research began; the task at hand being simply to gather its 'proof'. Though rather intricate histories appeared offering details of the wanderings of Israel into the British Isles, they were all operating from a central assumption of the truth of the British-Israel proposition.[1] In short, the theory presented an irresistible *identity* for the British people,

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[1]Oxonian [Rev. W. M. Holmes Milner, M.A.], *Israel's Wanderings; or, The Scuths, the Saxons, and the Kymry: A Connected Account, Tracing the Lost Tribes of Israel Into*

not just a simple ancestry. Put another way, the idea of racial origins was but a tool, albeit the most important one, in the creation of an identity which might elucidate British dominance. In this way British-Israelism emulated imperial Anglo-Saxonism. Anglo-Saxonists looked to the ancestral northern races of Europe as the secret of the race's dominance not simply because they were their ancestors but because they seemed to possess and could pass on the necessary traits for imperial prowess. British-Israelites, likewise, looked to Israel strictly in light of the Abrahamic promises. Racial descent was critical, but only if it indicated an ancestor, and thus identity, worth any note. The idea of Britain *as Israel* was certainly not new by the late nineteenth century. What British-Israelism emphasized was the idea of Britain as the racial, rather than allegorical, Israel. Thus it used one of the most accepted of nineteenth-century suppositions, that of the centrality of race to social and political dominance, to substantiate an image which the British had held of themselves for several centuries. While many Britons had considered themselves a chosen people for a long period of time, British-Israelites offered the racial explanation for this favor.

It is the purpose of this chapter to establish the position (both intellectually and socially) of the British-Israel theory in the late nineteenth century. To this end, a number of issues will receive attention here. Associations between Britain and Israel have had a long and varied history. A short summary of the rise of this correlation and of its various forms up to about 1840 will help in understanding the pre-history of the modern British-

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*the British Isles*. 2nd. ed. (London: John Heywood, 1885); Bertram de Weltden Weldon, *The Evolution of Israel: The Story of the English Race from 721 B.C. to the Present Day* (London: Harrison and Son, 1910).

Israel movement. Though it was largely an allegorical association, some indication of belief in a racial connection between the two peoples appears as early as the sixteenth century. The active propagation of this belief, however, did not begin until the late-nineteenth century. The basic beliefs of British-Israelism will also be examined in this chapter. Only the broadest of outlines can be given in any accounting of the Identity theory. The reason for this is simply that those who professed a belief in the Israelite ancestry of the British people often held quite different views as to the details of this descent and its implications. There was no 'party-line', so to speak, since British-Israel was less a party or doctrine than an opinion or collection of opinions. This said, the most important aspects of the theory (the racial and the imperial) were widely accepted by Identity adherents. These are the facets of British-Israel thought which will receive attention here, with only the most fundamental disagreements being given any notice. Finally, the chapter will gauge the extent of adherents to the British-Israel proposition. This, too, is difficult in that there are no records of the exact number of believers. Those who believed in the theory were never required, though they were encouraged, to join a group or association which might keep exact member lists. Estimates, however, are numerous. More important than raw numbers, I believe, is the adherence to the theory by so many of the "respectable" middle and upper classes, as well as the widespread press attention it received, both positive and negative, which could not help but to spread knowledge, if not acceptance, of it. At any rate, the embracing of the theory by "sober men," "professing Christians," "intelligent laymen," and "Christian ministers" was recognized, even by its

critics, as "one of the wonders of the nineteenth century."[2] The evidence that British-Israelites collected to substantiate their beliefs will not receive much attention in these pages as it will be examined more closely in later chapters. The function and importance of the British-Israel identity is best assessed in light of its evolution, nature, and extent. These will all be broached in the course of this chapter.

**Britain (or Israel) the Chosen**

From a very early period there was a sense among peoples in the British Isles that they were somehow connected to or analogous with the Hebrews. One of the earliest examples of this lies within the law code of Alfred the Great (849-899). Using the experiences of the ancient Israelites, Alfred sought to dictate the actions of his own people. "Vex thou not comers from afar," he decreed, "for remember, ye were once strangers in Egypt."[3] It is not remarkable that Israel would be a model in the establishment of a law code or society for a Christian people. The history of the people of God offered important lessons for shaping a corporeal kingdom congruent with His laws. Noteworthy, however, is that the lines of simile were often crossed, as seen in Alfred's code. The law did not read 'for Israelites were once strangers in Egypt,' but that "ye were." Later in the *Declaration of Arbroath* (6th April, 1320), one of the most important of Scottish national

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[2]Rev. Prof. Campbell, M.A. *The Lost Tribes: A Refutation of the Theories of Messrs. Wilson, Hine and Other Writers Who Have Identified Them with the English Nation. A Lecture Delivered Under the Auspices of the Young Men's Society of Erskine Church, Montreal, on 17th December, 1877* (Montreal: William Drysdale & Co., 1878), 21-22.

[3]33rd Law of King Alfred the Great. For the influence of the Old Testament legal systems on Alfred's law code see Allen J. Frantzen, *King Alfred* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 13-15.

documents, King Robert Bruce used Israel to mark the history of his own people. The nation of the Scots, the *Declaration* explains,

> having come from Scythia the greater, through the Tuscan Sea and the Hercules Pillars, and having for many ages taken its residence in Spain in the midst of a most fierce people, could never be brought in subjection by any people, how barbarous soever; *and having removed from these parts, above 1,200 years after the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt*, did by many victories and much toil obtain there the parts in the West which they still possess.[4]

Israel's experience in Egypt held particular import for those who wished to trace themselves back to a wandering people in search of a land of their own. For both Alfred and Robert I, the narrative of Israel's sojourn in Egypt represented a people who, owing to their devotion to God, found both protection and a homeland under His guidance; a model to be heeded. Sixty years after Bruce's declaration, this correlation found a more explicit voice south of the Tweed. At the opening of the English Parliament in 1377 the Bishop of St. David's introduced the new Heir Apparent, the Prince of Wales, Richard of Bordeaux (Richard II). In this instance, however, the divine protection and guidance of the Israel model was more confidently asserted rather than wished. Through the prince, the bishop urged, there was now "that peace over Israel which the Scriptures name--Israel being the heritage of God, and that heritage being also--England! For in good truth, I believe that God would never have honoured this country by victories such as had given glory to Israel, had he not intended it for His heritage also!"[5] The favor and attention

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[4]"Declaration of Arbroath," in *Scottish Historical Documents*, ed. Gordon Donaldson (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), 55, emphasis mine.

[5]Quoted in Dr. John Doran, F.S.A., *The Book of the Princes of Wales, Heirs to the Crown of England* (London: Richard Bentley, 1869), 197-98; see also *Banner of Israel* 1 (17 January 1877).

given to Israel by God, from their slavery in Egypt to their acquisition and defense of their land in Canaan, was worthy of being coveted. The reference to and adoption of Israelitish imagery might allow a claim on this same grace to be made by the peoples of Great Britain.

From the Elizabethan age to the accession of Victoria, the invocation of Israel as a British silhouette was far from uncommon. The preeminent cartographer John Norden dedicated his *Speculum Britanniæ* to Queen Elizabeth, whom he refers to as "the most Comfortable Nursing Mother of the Israel of God in the British Isles."[6] Francis Drake, in writing to the martyrologist John Foxe, ended his letter with a prayer that "God may be glorified, His church, our Queen and country preserved; the enemies of truth vanquished, and that we may have continual peace in Israel."[7] The importance of the image of Israel expanded during the course of the seventeenth-century political upheavals. A variety of radical groups which arose during the course of the Civil War spoke of themselves and their countrymen in terms of God's favored Israel. Not the least of these being the Fifth Monarchy men, whom even later British-Israelites recognized as early purveyors of Identity 'truth.'[8] Old Testament heroes and villains were used as models and archetypes for contemporary figures. The use of Israel, though, was not relegated simply to the more

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[6]John Norden, "Dedication," *Speculum Britanniæ, the First Parte: An Historicall Description of Middlesex* (London, 1593; reprint, London: Printed for Daniel Browne, 1723).

[7]Francis Drake to John Foxe, 27 April, 1587. Harleian Manuscripts (MS. 167, f. 104).

[8]Rev. A. A. Bridgman, Vicar of Lazayre, Isle of Man, "The Fifth Monarchy," *Banner of Israel* 15 (7 January 1891).

extreme political elements. It was, in fact, a model by which much contemporary life and events were understood; England and Scotland often being compared to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.[9] In defining themselves, the seventeenth-century inhabitants of the British Isles found the ideas and terms surrounding ancient Israel the most appropriate. By the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, as Linda Colley points out, equating Britain with Israel was a favorite rhetorical tool.[10] The substitution of 'Britain' for 'Israel' and vice-versa in Bible quotations, political speeches, and sermons continued, while appeal was often made to the special place which God must have in his heart for Britain, as He once did for the Israelites. Apart from this, one of the first uses of the term 'British Israel' is found in Alexander Cruden's widely respected Biblical *Concordance* (1761). In his dedication to George III, Cruden blesses the king with these words: "May the great God be the guide of your life, and direct and prosper you that it may be said by the present and future ages, that KING GEORGE THE THIRD hath been an HEZEKIAH [king of Judah ca. 8th c. BC] to our *British Israel.*"[11] These examples, whose number could easily be multiplied, attest to the centrality of the idea of chosen Israel in the slow evolution of "British" identity.[12]

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[9]Christopher Hill, "Chosen Nation, Chosen People," and "Covenanted Peoples: Scotland and England," chaps. in *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 264-83.

[10]Colley, *Britons*, 30-33.

[11]Alexander Cruden, "Dedication," *A Complete Concordance to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments*, 2d ed. (London: Printed for J. Knapton, 1761).

[12]The term "British" here is used guardedly since Great Britain, as a nation, did not exist until 1707. The various groups inside Britain, however, seemed to look to the Hebrews as an ancestor or model to follow.

By the seventeenth century the idea of being a chosen nation was linked directly to Protestantism. From that time on 'British-Israel' would implicitly mean 'Protestant Israel'. As ancient Israel had been God's weapon against His enemies, the new chosen people had assumed the battle standard and become God's instrument against the agents of the Papal Antichrist.[13] In 1814, in the wake of the war with Imperial France, Ralph Wedgwood published his *Book of Remembrance*. Though a remarkably rambling account of the history of Britain and its experience with the Protestant faith, Wedgwood's work does clearly encapsulate the idea of Britain as the Protestant crusader. France, and in this case the person of Napoleon, fills the shoes of the antichrist impeccably. While Revolutionary France had been atheistic, Imperial France had made peace with the Roman Pontiff. Either way the French were clearly the enemies of God and thus Britain, as Israel, had been raised up to destroy them.[14] In all of these cases, however, there is a marked difference from the later British-Israel movement. Rarely was there any attempt to link the British people genealogically with the Hebrews. It was enough, perhaps even preferable, to believe that God looked upon Britain as being *like* Israel, as taking Israel's place as God's most favored people. Britain, or one or more of its peoples, were the allegorical

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[13]Hill, *The English Bible*, 284-97; Colley, *Britons*, 368-69.

[14]Wedgwood, *The Book of Remembrance: The Outline of an Almanack Constructed on the Ancient Cycles of Time, and Proving, by an Harmony of Prophetic Numbers, That This is the Predicted Era of New Things, the Final Restitution of All Things; the Fulness of the Gentiles, the Accomplishment of Israel's Warfare. Also, that Great Babylon is Now Fallen, and Satan Binding, in the Empire and Person of Napoleon. Evincing Also that the British Empire is the Bow of Ephraim* (London: Printed for the Author, 1814). Wedgwood's work was of particular interest to later British-Israelites. He was one of the first to assert the popular British-Israel notion that the root word of British (viz., *Brit*) is the Hebrew word for 'covenant.' This, they asserted, implied a recognition of the covenant which God had made with Israel being carried on, even nominally, by the *Brit*-ish.

Israel, at times even the Israel of prophecy, but certainly not the direct descendants of the Israelites.[15] The idea of racial descent which became so fundamental to the nineteenth-century Identity movement was not completely absent prior to the publication of John Wilson's work in 1840, yet until that time the correlation of Britain with Israel remained by and large based upon analogy. This is not to say that the juxtaposition was a purely literary or rhetorical one. It was, in many cases, a deeply held religious conviction that Britain was now God's chosen nation. The expression of this idea would naturally take on the imagery, terminology, and ideas surrounding Israel, God's first chosen people. The element and importance of biological descent, however, was largely absent.

Little by little, though, suggestions were made that the ten tribes of Israel had migrated into the western parts of Europe, including the British Isles. Some of the earliest authors to actually suggest that elements of the tribes had made their way into Britain were not British at all. In the late sixteenth century Pierre Le Loyer, an Angevin magistrate renowned for both his judicial wisdom and his interest in the occult and mysterious, published a large volume in which he claimed to have found the lost tribes.[16] Though his previous writings had detailed the history and appearances of ghosts, angels and demons,

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[15]See Rev. James Hatley Frere, *A Combined View of the Prophecies of Daniel, Esdras, and St. John*, 2d ed. (London: Printed for the Author, 1815), in which Britain is portrayed as the 'Israel' mentioned in prophecy who would receive the greater portion of God's favor.

[16]Pierre Le Loyer, *Edom, ou les Colonies Iduméanes, Colonies d'Hercule Phénicien el de Thyr, Extraictes du Cinquiesm Livre di Origines, Migrations et Colonies des Peuples* (Paris: N. Buon, 1620).

Le Loyer here turned his attention to the solving of a very different type of mystery.[17] In the end, he concluded that the so-called 'lost' tribes of Israel could not really be considered lost at all; they were, in fact, the modern British people.[18] An early history of Holstein, one of the northern European districts from which the ancestors of the British people allegedly had come, also asserts that some connection existed between the peoples of the north and the Hebrew tribes. "The Jutes," it reveals, "were Jews of the Tribe of Dan, and the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons were kindred nations."[19] By extension, then, all these elements of the British population had descended from one or more tribes of the Israelites. For the French divine Jacques Abbadie, the modern existence of the tribes was beyond question. Abbadie was considered one of the "ablest defenders of Christianity in his day," and his religious writings had made him famous throughout Europe.[20] In 1723 he published *Le Triomphe de la Providence et de la Religion* in which he laid out his ideas on the ultimate fate of the tribes of Israel. The blessings given to Abraham and his de-

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[17]Idem, *A Treatise of Spectres or Straunge Sights, Visions and Apparitions Appearing Sensibly Unto Men. Wherein is Delivered the Nature of Spirites, Angels, &c. With a Table. Newly Done Out of French into English*, trans. Z. Jones (London: Printed by Val S. for Mathew Lownes, 1605).

[18]Jean Frollo, "Dans Le Mystère," *Le Petit Parisien* (Paris), 24 June 1913.

[19]Helmoldus, *Chronicon Hosatiæ Vetus, sub nomine continuationis Chronicon Slavorum (Helmodi Autore Prsbytero Bremensi) usque ad annum 1448* (G. G. Leibnitii Accessiones Historicæ, 1698), 54. It should be noted that the author's use of terminology is somewhat inaccurate. The 'Jews' are only from the tribes of Judah and Levi, which were never lost in the way which the ten tribes, including that of Dan, were. It was extremely common, however, to speak of all Israelites as Jews though this is technically, and for the British-Israelites critically, mistaken.

[20]Samuel Smiles, *The Huguenots in France After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* (London: Strahan & Co., 1873); as quoted in "The Learned Dr. Abbadie," *Life*

scendants, Abbadie explained, were bestowed by God *in perpetuum*, meaning that they could never have been fully revoked. The tribes to whom they were promised, therefore, must still exist in order to one day receive their fulfillment. In assessing their history and the prophecies which concern them, Abbadie concluded that the ten tribes had most likely become the ten Gothic peoples (including the ancestors of the British) who invaded Europe at the waning of Rome's power. "Unless the ten tribes have flown into the air, or been plunged into the earth's centre," he writes, "they must be sought for in that part of the north which, in the time of Constantine, was converted to the Christian faith."[21] The motivation for these authors in establishing the Israelitish origin of the British and northern Europeans may never be known. For Le Loyer it was most likely, given his other interests, the solution of one of the more persistent mysteries of the Western world: the whereabouts of the tribes of Israel. For Abbadie, possibly the verification of prophecy was the most compelling. The racial and nationalist feelings so deeply imbued in the later British-Israel movement, however, do not appear to have played much part in any case.

In Britain, the idea of a Hebrew heritage also experienced a rather sporadic advocacy until the rise of the modern movement. Its earliest proposal of any note was made by the Parliamentarian and friend of Oliver Cromwell, John Sadler. Sadler, in studying

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*From the Dead: Being a National Bell-Ringing Journal Advocating the Identity of the British Nation with the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel* 1 (February 1874): 134.

[21]Jacques Abbadie, D.D., *Le Triomphe de la Providence et de la Religion, au l'Ouverture des set Seaux par le Fils de Dieu; où Trouvera le Premiépartie de l'Apocalypse, Clairement Expliquée . . . avec une . . . Demonstration de la Verité de la Religion Chrétienne*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam: Chez M.C. Le Cene, 1723).

the development and organization of the British legal and governmental systems, concluded that they were extremely similar to those of ancient Israel.[22] He suggested that the people of Britain might have come from Israel and brought their legal forms and systems with them, thus explaining the uncanny resemblance. In light of his close relationship with the Lord Protector, in fact, Sadler's views have been credited with convincing Cromwell to hear Manasseh Ben Israel's appeal and readmit the Jews to Britain.[23] Sadler's book, however, was not a treatise on the descent of the British from the Israelites. Its primary purpose was to legitimate the English Constitution and the primacy of Parliament by linking them to the divinely-inspired government of Israel. The explanation and legitimization of current conditions by an appeal to an Israelitish past, nevertheless, is a theme which would recur with increasing frequency in the nineteenth century. Though in Britain the dominant mode of equating Israel with the British had been in allegorical terms, by the early nineteenth century others followed Sadler's more corporeal approach. The details of the wanderings of Israel received early expression at the hand of Rev. Barnaby Murphy. In his *Precursory Proofs That Israelites Came from Egypt into Ireland, and that the Druids Expected the Messiah* (1816), Murphy attempted to account for the sometimes striking similarity between Druidical religion and the religious prac-

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[22]John Sadler, M.P., *Rights of the Kingdom; or, The Customs of Our Ancestors. Touching the Liberty, Power, Election, or Succession of Our Kings and Parliaments, Our True Liberty, Due Allegiance, Three Estates, Their Legitimate Power, Original, Judicial, and Executive; With the Militia. Freely Discussed Through the British, Saxon, Norman Laws and Histories* (London, 1649; reprint, London: J. Kidgell, 1682).

[23]*The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1939 ed., s.v. "Anglo-Israelism," by Abraham Cohen.

tices and ideas of the Hebrews at the time of their Exodus.[24] In 1820 the prebendary William Waddilove came to the conclusion that the Scots, Irish, and Saxons had descended from the people of Israel.[25] Dr. William Pinnock's widely acclaimed *Catechism of the History of Ireland* mentions the probable Hebrew origin of a least a segment of the Irish population.[26] In an article originally appearing in the London magazine, *The Jewish Expositor* in 1828 and reprinted in the *Hebrew Christian Witness* almost fifty years later, another segment of the British population is brought into the discussion. The Rev. Joshua William Brooks, writing under the pen-name Abdiel, concluded that the Welsh population, on account of its language, religion and customs could make a fair claim to Israelitish blood.[27] It was their emphasis on the actual descent of (rather than a simple similarity between) Britain from ancient Israel which separated these authors from much of the thought of their time. These few voices, however, were to be drowned out or nearly forgotten in the torrent of literature which appeared on the subject after the publication of

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[24]The poet William Blake (1757-1827) prefaced chapter two of his poem *Jerusalem* with a note addressed "To the Jews." In it he explained that "your ancestors derived their origin from Abraham, Heber, Shem, and Noah, who were Druids." William Blake, *Poetry and Prose*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 463; quoted in, J. F. C. Harrison, *Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780-1850* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 80-81. Murphy also started a short lived journal, *The Advocate of Israel in the Isle of Erin* (1 January 1816). See Rev. A. B. Grimaldi, M.A., "Earliest Israelitish Writers," *Banner of Israel* 30 (20 June 1906): 263.

[25]William James Darley Waddilove, *The Lamp in the Wilderness* (Hexam: Printed for the Author, 1847).

[26]William Pinnock, *Catechism of the History of Ireland: Containing a Brief Outline of the Principle Occurences Which Have Taken Place in That Country, From the Most Distant Period of its History to the Present Time* (London: Printed for G. B. Whittaker, 1825).

[27]Abdiel, *Hebrew Christian Witness* 2 (1875): 193.

John Wilson's *Our Israelitish Origin* in 1840.[28] From that time on the discussion relied on a new set of assumptions that emphasized the central importance of racial descent in the formation of a people's identity.

**The History and Destiny of the Lost Tribes**

"Next to the authorship of the Junius Letters, and the identity of the Man in the Iron mask," a popular London magazine proclaimed, "the subject that most excites the curiosity of those who delight in ransacking the waste-paper baskets of history is the discovery of the Lost Tribes of Israel. There is quite a school of Englishmen--Anglo-Israelites--whose happiness in life depends upon the conviction that they are the direct descendants of the Ten Tribes."[29] Central to the British-Israel world view was the idea that the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel had been lost from history and yet retained a distinct, though hidden, identity. This belief depended upon the clear differentiation made between the kingdom of Israel and the two tribes of the southern kingdom of Judah. King Solomon had ruled over the twelve Hebrew tribes as a united people, though he consistently showed partiality in policy decisions towards the southern tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin. Upon his death in about 925 BC his successor, Rehoboam, continued this favored treatment of these tribes. Out of the discontent sown in the northern tribes a general by the name of Jeroboam raised the standard of rebellion and built for himself and his descendants a new kingdom, the kingdom of Israel. From that time on the two peoples

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[28]John Wilson, *Lectures on Ancient Israel and the Israelitish Origin of the Modern Nations of Europe* (Cheltenham: Printed for Robert Mimpress, 1840).

[29]"The Afghans Are the Lost Ten Tribes: By His Highness Abdur Rahman Khan, Ameer of Afghanistan," *Pall Mall Gazette* (London), 23 June 1885.

were distinct. For two hundred years the two kingdoms followed separate paths though they met with a similar fate. Around 725 BC, the Assyrians invaded the northern kingdom and took the Israelites captive. Nearly one hundred and thirty years later, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar invaded and conquered Judah, taking its inhabitants to Babylon. Unlike the Israelites, however, the Jews (Hebrews from the kingdom of Judah) were allowed to return to their land with the downfall of Babylon at the hand of Cyrus the Great of Persia. From that time on the history of the Jews has been followed without difficulty, yet the ultimate fate of the ten tribes passed from human knowledge.

The search for the 'lost tribes' has occupied the minds of antiquarians and historians for centuries. Virtually nothing is known of their fate after their captivity. The major source for the history of the tribes was the Bible. The story of the fall of the northern kingdom is told in 2 Kings, chapter 17. The king of Assyria (probably Sargon II), angered at the withholding of tribute by Israel, "invaded the whole country, and reaching Samaria, besieged it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea he captured Samaria and deported its people to Assyria and settled them in Halah and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of Media. . . . They were carried into exile from their own land to Assyria; and there they are to this day."[30] Apart from their mention in the Apocrypha (2 Esdras 13: 39-47) and brief notice in the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus (c. 37-100 AD), the ten tribes as a people disappear from the history of the Hebrews.[31] "The total absence of all evidence of their fate," Albert Hyamson remarked, "has cleared the

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[30]2 Kings 17: 6, 23 NEB (New English Bible).

[31]Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Bk. IX, sec. xiv. 1.; Bk. XI, sec. v., 2., in *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Lynn, MA: Hendrickson, 1981).

ground for innumerable theories, and in no district of the earth's surface have not the Tribes at one time or another been located; no race has escaped the honour, or the suspicion, of being descended from the subjects of Jeroboam."[32] The most popular theories have found them in sections of China, in Tartary, in Afghanistan, in the Nestorians, the Brahmins, and even the American Indians.[33] The motivations for these discoveries were many. Explanations were needed to account for the Jewish customs held by certain peoples of the Near East, to explicate the origin of the American Indians, and to make sense of the prophecies which speak of the existence of the ten tribes at the fullness of time. Without a doubt, though, a strong motivation was the irresistible attraction of a mystery, especially one which involved the fate of God's chosen race.[34] To find the lost tribes was

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[32]Albert Hyamson, "The Lost Tribes and the Influence of the Search for Them on the Return of the Jews to England," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 15 (1902): 641.

[33]For a detailed survey of the theories surrounding the whereabouts of the lost tribes see Allen H. Godbey, Ph.D., *The Lost Tribes A Myth: Suggestions Towards Rewriting Hebrew History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1930). Godbey, however, pays little attention to the British-Israelite theory. For other treatments of the lost tribes see Thomas Thorogood, *Jews in America, or Probabilities That The Americans are of That Race. With the Removall of Some Contrary Reasonings, and Earnest Desires for Effectual Endeavors to Make them Christian* (London: T. Slater, 1650); Israel Worsley, *A View of the American Indians: Their General Character, Customs, Language, Public Festivals, Religious Rites and Traditions: Shewing Them to be the Descendants of the Ten Tribes of Israel* (reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977); Joseph Wolff, *Researches and Missionary Labours Among the Jews, Mohammedeans, and Other Sects* (London: J. Nisbet, 1835); Asahel Grant, *The Nestorians: or, the Lost Tribes: Containing Evidence of Their Identity; An Account of Their Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies; Together with Sketches of Travels in Ancient Assyria, Armenia, Media, and Mesopotamia; and Illustrations of Scripture Prophecy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1841). For an overview of the search for the lost tribes see Isadore Singer, ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Tribes, Lost Ten."

[34]Grant, *The Nestorians*, 138-40.

to know part of the mind of God. The search was carried on by students of various times, nations, and religions and over the centuries many "indisputable" proofs were produced to connect modern peoples to this ancient favored race.

British-Israelism, however as indicated above, was not in any real sense a 'search' for the lost tribes. It was less interested in following the fate of the ten tribes as such than in connecting their history and destiny to that of the Anglo-Saxons and thus supplying them with an illustrious identity. Its investigations proceeded from a conclusion, not from premises. This inverted syllogism started from the assumption that the Anglo-Saxons must be Israelites because they enjoyed the dominance promised to Israel. "Is it the fact, or is it not the fact," the Rev. Canon Blake Brownrigg asked,

> that it was promised to Israel that it should occupy the chief position among the nations; that it should be a great colonising power, that it should possess an extensive heathen empire; that it should possess strongholds in the lands of its enemies; that it should lend to many nations and borrow from none; that it should be the great missionary agent to the world; that it should have the Sabbath and the Ten Commandments as a sign distinguishing it from Gentile nations?
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> Secondly, *Is there any other nation* to which such promises were made? and,
>
> Thirdly, *Is it the fact, or is it not the fact*, that these promises are being fulfilled in the British nation?[35]

This being the case, the evidence for their descent must exist. Historical and scriptural testimony was put forth to connect the modern Anglo-Saxon to the captive Israelites of old. The two end points of Israel's hidden history were set: the Assyrian captivity and the emergence of the English people. British-Israelites set out to find the missing center links to connect them. There were no obvious similarities between the two peoples and no strong bonds between their histories. At best there were only suggestions. The Israelites

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[35]Rev. Canon Blake Brownrigg, "Three Questions," *Anglo-Israel Almanack for the Year 1889* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1888), 26.

had disappeared from history about the same time the Anglo-Saxons emerged from obscurity. The Assyrians had taken the Israelites to the areas around the Caucasus Mountains, the same general area from which the Anglo-Saxons came. The Israelites were known as House of Isaac or Beth-Sak. The historian Sharon Turner traced to Anglo-Saxons to a people called the Sacæ or Saka. These and other suggestive pieces of evidence served, more than anything, to strengthen a conclusion rather than to build an argument. They were enough, however, to convince many of the veracity of the descent.

For a theory to be built upon such historically inconclusive evidence, other support must be found. If other peoples (i.e. the Nestorians and the Afghans) seemed ethnically closer to the Hebrews than did the Anglo-Saxon, not one of them could lay as large a claim to the promises. It was in regards to the prophecies that the British-Israelites made their strongest case. God had promised the descendants of Jacob (Israel) world dominion. They were to be a great and multitudinous people, a strong people in warfare, a financially dominant people, a nation which was to send off people and colonize the earth. They were, in short, to become the preeminent race. Not only could no other people claim to have these characteristics of Israel but God could never bestow these blessings upon any other nation than Israel. Since the Anglo-Saxon race possessed them it must be Israel. If these premises were accepted the logic of the conclusion was inescapable. Though the history of Israel could not be followed, its prophetic destiny could certainly be outlined. That destiny so closely resembled, in almost every detail, the modern history of the Anglo-Saxons that the two peoples must be one and the same.

## The Fundamentals of the Theory

The belief espoused by the modern British-Israel movement, despite all its slight variations, anchored itself on the contention that the British people had descended biologically from the lost Israelites. In and of itself, however, this assertion had little more than a passing ethnological interest. If true, this discovery by itself could only lead to a re-write of the racial history of both the British and the Hebrews. The importance of the Semitic descent of the British was of concern to those who espoused it only because of its implications regarding the present splendor and future destiny of the race. It was here that fundamental faith in the Biblical prophecies became of the utmost importance. The numerous possible implications which could be read from (or into) the prophecies concerning Israel was not only the great strength of the theory but also the greatest source of divergence and dispute between its adherents. Though there were important and sometimes high-pitched debates regarding several of the minor details of the Identity, several central beliefs were embraced by most British-Israelites. It was these, in essence, which most clearly defined the theory and therefore it will be these which receive the most attention here.[36] While it will be impossible to explain every variation on these views held by adherents, some effort will be made to dissect different interpretations of some of the most controversial ones. Emerging from the numerous journals and hundreds of individual volumes written on the central thesis, never the less, came a relatively well-defined

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[36]Except in cases of direct quotation, the sources cited in the following pages refer to examples of where the specified beliefs can be found. The basic arguments were repeated in most British-Israel works and therefore to give a full list of references to each point would be impractical. Those cited are simply some instances, among many, where the specific belief is put forth.

set of convictions which made up the British-Israel theory. These were the ones which most clearly reflected, either directly or indirectly, the driving force behind much British-Israel thought: the formation of a British identity founded upon racial origins and directed towards the elucidation of the race's dominance.

Chief among these tenets and pivotal to the theory was the belief in the Israelitish origin of the British people. Working from both historical and scriptural evidence, advocates pieced together the history of God's chosen people. When dispossessed of their land at the hands of the Assyrians, the Israelites were resettled in the area around the Caspian Sea. Though termed 'the captivity,' the Israelites were generally free to come and go where they liked. Following the general westward nomadic migrations, especially of a people known as the Scythians, the great body of the Israelites moved into Europe, leaving traces of their migrations as they went along. Moving ever westward, the Israelites, now blind to their identity as had been prophesied,[37] eventually reached the northwest of Europe and migrated into Britain under the various names of Angles (Ephraim), Saxons (Isaac's sons), Jutes (Jews and Danites), Danes (Danites), and Normans (Benjamin). Once in Britain, they were given time to rest after their great wanderings before they were to be sent out again to colonize the earth and spread the glory of God.[38] In the place which had been 'specially prepared' for them (the British Isles) they would received the word of God and become Christians. Once they had accepted the true word of

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[37]Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin: Lectures on Ancient Israel and the Israelitish Origin of the Modern Nations of Europe*. 3rd American ed. from 3rd London ed. (Philadelphia: Daniels & Smith, 1851), 18-19.

[38]Edward Hine, *Forty-Seven Identifications of the British Nation with the Lost House of Israel* (London: S.W. Partridge, 1974), 13; see Isa. 41: 1 (NEB).

God, (Protestantism) their promised dominion of the earth would begin.[39] Their general blindness as to their true identity would continue until such a time as their promised blessings began to be poured forth upon them (during the 19th century). At that time the veil would be slowly lifted by means of the British-Israel movement and the people of Israel would become aware of their identity and be once more reunited with their God.[40] All of this was according to divine plan and it all could be verified by history and current events.

Variations and disputes concerning the above account, however, did exist. There were disagreements about which nomadic peoples represented the Israelites, the exact place of their captivity, the paths of their migrations, and the eventual resting places of the individual tribes. The most important of these variations became a seriously divisive issue within the movement itself. All adherents accepted the proposition that the British people were of the stock of Israel. Controversy arose, however, when attempts were made to discern whether the Anglo-Saxon race was the entire people of Israel or just a segment thereof. Disagreement on this issue lead to the dispute surrounding what was known as the Teutonic Theory. During the early days of Identity propagation, especially under its principal founder John Wilson, the ten tribes were believed to compose all the northern Protestant nations of Europe. The perceived ethnic relationship between the

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[39]Colonel John Garnier, *The Ten Tribes From Captivity Until Now: A Critical Analysis and Historical Proof of the British-Israel Theory. Also, the Imperial Power and Rising Up of Israel and the Enmity of the Nations in the Latter Days* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1903), 213.

[40]Right Rev. Jonathan H. Titcomb, late Bishop of Rangoon, *A Message to the Church From the Nineteenth Century* (Robert Banks & Son, 1887).

British and the other 'Teutonic' peoples virtually mandated that if the British were Israelites their racial relations must be as well. Though all these nations generally enjoyed the prosperity promised by God the British were especially blessed, according to the 'Teutonists', because they were from the tribe of Ephraim--the "first born" and thus the principal heir to the blessings. This Teutonic Theory was foreshadowed as early as the eighteenth century, and until the 1870s it remained the dominant mode of interpreting the Identity.[41] Northern European world hegemony, as well as British domination, were both here explained. The advancers of the Teutonic interpretation, however, still emphasized the British as the most chosen of the Chosen People. By the 1880s, however, most British-Israelites had rejected this view in favor of one which appealed more to their racial and national pride. Israel, they argued, must exist as one people. Therefore, it was far more likely that all the tribes of Israel could be found within the British peoples alone either within the British Isles, the colonies, or America. Perhaps some Israelites were still among the peoples on the continent, but these were destined to make their way either into the British Isles, or emigrate to the colonies or the United States. There they would assimilate with the other tribes and rejoin the family of Israel. Racially, however, Israel was to be found in the British people alone.[42] The Teutonic Theory, however, never fully died out. For a time great animosity existed between the two interpretations. Yet while the Britain-as-Israel school eventually became dominant, elements of the Teutonic theory would continue to reassert themselves so that even today the movement is much more

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[41]See chapter 3 below.

tolerant of certain Teutonic ideas.[43] Despite these variations the general idea remained unchanged. The peoples of Britain were racially of the stock of Israel. Whether they were all the tribes or simply the chief tribe of Ephraim did not affect their receipt of the blessings. The central idea, that the British had come into such a favored position because of their origins, was therefore not affected. Their identity as Israel ensured their eternal prosperity while their continued wealth and greatness bore witness to their descent from Israel. The union between racial identity and racial prosperity was here consummated. This was the foundation of the belief.

The other fundamental tenets of the theory centered around the major contention of the racial origins of the Anglo-Saxons. For the British to be Israelites, they had to conform to many of the descriptions surrounding Israel in the prophecies. Given the fact that the movement was socially and politically conservative, many of the traditional elements and structures of British society received substantiation in these very same prophetic utterances. Many of these, adherents believed, dated from their days in Palestine and gave further proof as to their identity.[44] Foremost among them was the monarchy. The unwavering support for the Royal family stemmed primarily from the widely held belief

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[42]Edward Hine was the first to articulate this idea in a systematic way. His writings and lectures during the 1870s redefined the movement to emphasize the Britain-as-Israel rather than the Teutonic school.

[43]See *U.S. News and World Report* 117 (January 2 1995): 109 for an advertisement from a modern Identity organization which includes Scandinavian and Germanic nations among the tribes of Israel.

[44]Rev. Lawrence Graeam Allan Roberts, Commander, R.N., Rector of Ardley, Bicester, Oxford, *Palestine Into Britain. Scripturally, Historically, Ethnologically, Numismatically and Ecclesiastically Considered.* With Maps and Diagrams of Coins. (London: Robert Banks, 1910).

among British-Israelites that the Royal House of Britain had descended from the Royal House of Israel.[45] While the people of Britain were descended from the Israelites of the northern kingdom, the British Royal family could trace its ancestry back to David and the kings of Judah.[46] In other words, the monarchs of Britain were of the tribe of Judah, or Jews, while their subjects were their Israelite relations. God had promised that the line of David would rule over Israel *forever* (1 Chron. 17: 11-12; 2 Chron. 13: 5; 21: 7). Since the Jews had no king, and had not had one for many centuries, British-Israelites believed that this prophecy must apply to them. Forever meant forever, God could not go back on his promises. The Royal family, then, had to be descended from the line of Judah. The genealogical connections were duly marshaled in.

The first link in the chain of evidence connecting the British royal family to the line of David was the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah had been sent by God to the southern kingdom of Judah to warn them of their impending fate at the hands of the Babylonians. God had told Jeremiah "This day I give you authority over nations, to pull down and to uproot, to destroy and demolish, to build and to plant."[47] The Book of Jeremiah details the pulling down, uprooting, destruction, and demolition of the kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians, but where, British-Israelites asked, does it show the building and planting? This omission, they explained, was the key. Before the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah es-

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[45]This contention, as will be discussed later, was the basis for the support which the movement received at the hands of the Royal family itself.

[46]Rev. F. R. A. Glover, *England: The Remnant of Judah and The Israel of Ephraim. The Two Families Under One Head, A Hebrew Episode In British History.* 1st edition. (London: Rivingtons, 1861).

[47]Jer. 1: 9-10 (NEB)

caped from Judæa and traveled to Egypt.[48] His fate after that remained a mystery. His death is never recorded yet his mission to build and to plant, the Identity claimed, was as yet incomplete. At about the same time that Jeremiah disappeared from Judæa a legendary figure appeared in Ireland. Described as a great teacher, lawgiver, and prophet from the east, Ollam Fodhla earned an exalted place in the early history of Ireland. Working from chronology, philology, legendary accounts, and general descriptions, British-Israelites identified Ollam Fodhla with Jeremiah.[49] According to this idea Jeremiah escaped from Jerusalem prior to its destruction. He took with him not only the treasures of the Hebrews, including Jacob's Pillow and the Ark of the Covenant, but also the daughter of the last king of Judah. After a short sojourn in Egypt and Spain, Jeremiah and the princess Tea Tephi landed in Ireland. There they found refuge among the people of northern Ireland, who themselves were of Hebrew origin. Before the captivity of Israel in 722 BC, the story goes, a portion of the seafaring tribe of Dan, foreseeing the coming peril, escaped to the west. The tribe of Dan had worked closely with the great trading nation of the Phoenicians. Through them they were well aware of the British Isles from which lead and tin had been procured for centuries. The history of Ireland tells of a people, the Tuatha de Danaan (or tribe of Dan), who arrived by sea and became dominant

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[48]Glover, "Jacob's Stone: A Pilar of Witness," in Edward Hine, *Flashes of Light: Being Part 2 of Forty-Seven Identifications of the British Nation With the Lost House of Israel* (London: Marshall Brother, 1900), 121-24.

[49]Oxonian. Vicar of Crown Parish, Sunk Island. *Tara Vindicata: The Hebrew Episode in Irish History Verified. With Table of a Hundred Generations from David to David* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1903), 6-8.

over portions of the isle.[50] By the time Jeremiah arrived, the tribe of Dan had established rule in Ireland. The princess Tea Tephi was married to the Danite ruler of Ireland and from them sprung the royal line. Descendants of this family established themselves in subsequent centuries as the kings of Argylshire, the sovereigns of Scotland, and eventually, under James VI of Scotland and I of England, over Great Britain. From David of Judah to the modern sovereigns of Britain, the Royal line was unbroken.[51] Identity writers produced not only genealogical charts showing a detailed account of this descent, but also wrote several histories of Jeremiah's flight from Jerusalem to Ireland drawing from ancient histories, traditional legends, and more modern research.[52] A considerable amount of suggestive evidence was put forth to make this connection and a majority of adherents to the Identity accepted this as truth.

Closely connected with this account was the history surrounding the Coronation Stone of Great Britain which resides under the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey and upon which rulers in Britain had been crowned for centuries. This stone had been taken from Scotland where it was known as the Stone of Scone and used as the seat of

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[50]Frederick Charles Danvers, K.C.C, F.R.S.S. "Migrations to Ireland," chap. in *"Israel Redivivus." Being a History of the Tribes of Israel (Distinct From That of Judah) From the Times When the Biblical Accounts of Them Came to An End* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1905), 209-36.

[51]Rev. Alexander Beaufort Grimaldi, M.A. *The Queen's Royal Descent From King David the Psalmist* (London: Robert Banks, S.W. Partridge, 1880); Oxonian, *The Illustrious Lineage of the Royal House of Britain.* (London: R. Folkard & Son, 1923). Of note, Oxonian included much of the genealogy found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History*, including Brutus, Arthur, and Constantine, in his genealogical chart of the Royal Family.

[52]Oxonian, *Tara Vindicata*; for a similar account by a non-British-Israelite writer see John Arthur Goodchild, *The Light of the West. Part I. The Dannite Colony* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., 1898).

coronation for Scottish kings. Prior to its existence in Scotland the history surrounding the stone is unclear though stories are told of a similar stone in Ireland known as *Lia Phial* or "the stone of destiny."[53] British-Israelites were convinced that the two stories refer to the same stone which had followed the line of David from Ireland to Scotland and finally to England. For adherents this stone was in fact Jacob's Pillow which Jeremiah had taken with him to Ireland in his flight from Jerusalem. It was the stone upon which Jacob slept at the gates of Luz and had the dream in which the blessings of Abraham were given to him.[54] It was now the symbol of the promises in the hands of the people of Israel. For years it had been known in England as "Jacob's Pillow," though the origin of this name had always been a mystery.[55] In this sense British-Israelites added little to traditional lore but only affirmed that this ancient nomenclature was founded in authentic history. In their minds, to look at the Coronation Stone was to see the physical symbol of the promises of God in that it had become the cornerstone of the empire and the central symbol of the power of the monarchy. Once again, not all these ideas were accepted universally by believers in the Identity. One of the most important adherents, Bishop Jonathan H. Titcomb, rejected the Davidic descent of the Royal family, preferring the more traditional interpretation of the perpetual line of David being fulfilled in Jesus

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[53]Mrs. G. Albert Rogers, *The Coronation Stone and England's Interest In It* (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1880).

[54]Gen. 28: 10-19 (NEB).

[55]Alan Isaacs and Jennifer Monks, eds. *The Cambridge Illustrated Dictionary of British Heritage*, s.v. "Stone of Scone;" Gertrude Jacobs, *Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore, and Symbols*, part II, s.v. "Lia Fail."

Christ.[56] Yet the vast majority of British-Israelites did believe in it and the members of the Royal family known to hold Identity views first found interest in the Identity through the belief of their descent from King David. The entire Hebrew people, therefore, were represented in the British Isles, the subjects of the throne being from the House of Israel, the sovereigns from Judah.

**British-Israelism and the House of Judah**

With all its prophetic implications, the theory also contained at least one extremely important and unusual racial assumption. If the British were Israelites, there was virtually no escaping the obvious close racial relationship between the Anglo-Saxon and the Jew. It is here, perhaps, that the theory is most divergent from the other racial beliefs and conservative political movements of its time and even later. Few, if any, nationalist movements in nineteenth-century Europe considered the Jews to be the racial equals of the rest of the population, most, in fact found them anathema.[57] British-Israelism not only could not avoid the assertion of racial fraternity, but was built upon it. The Jews, in the eyes of the Identity, were aliens not in race but only in creed. Religious convictions, however, could be altered. Once the Jews were converted, according the British-Israel theory, they

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[56]Titcomb, "Appendix F. On the Theory That Queen Victoria Sits Upon the Throne of David," in *A Message to the Church*, 139-42.

[57]For some recent works on the nature of anti-Semitism in Europe see Shmuel Almog, ed., *Nationalism & Antisemitism in Modern Europe, 1815-1945* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1990); Pierre Birnbaum, *Anti-semitism in France: A Political History From Leon Blum to the Present*, trans. Miriam Kochan (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1992); Heinz-Dietrich Lowe, *The Tzars and the Jews: Reform, Reaction, and Anti-Semitism in Imperial Russia, 1772-1917* (New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993); Paul Lawrence Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany from Kant to Wagner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

would be welcomed fully into the family of restored Israel. Though virtually unique in its time in this respect, the theory did have important historical precedent in Britain. The Identity both revived and revised much of the philo-Semitism of seventeenth-century England.[58] The glorification of the Jews in the years before their readmission in 1655 stemmed from several considerations around this ancient people. Belief in the England's role as a new Protestant Israel, in the importance of the Jews in future ages for the fulfillment of prophecy, the acceptance of Hebrew as the language of Eden and thus the parent tongue of all nations, and the belief in the discovery of the lost tribes in the American Indians all contributed to a sense that the people of Israel were soon to play a magnificent part in God's plan for mankind. Thus England, as God's new chosen, should take the lead in accepting the Jews into their civil society. Modern British-Israel thought accepted nearly all of these ideas, aside from the Hebrew descent of the Indians, but from a particularly nineteenth-century angle. The descent of the British from Israel meant that Britain's future destiny and current relationship with the Jews were determined along racial lines. The prophetic destiny which seventeenth-century scholars foresaw for the Jews alone now was to be adopted by their brother Israelites. The Hebrew language was the mother tongue, perhaps of all mankind, but most particularly of those dialects found in Britain. The philo-Semitism found in modern British-Israelism was the result less of religious

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[58]David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603-1655* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), esp. chap. IV.

opinion concerning the future role of the Jews than from the sense of racial fraternity between the two peoples.[59]

When misunderstood or misrepresented, the Identity's convictions concerning the history and ultimate destiny of the Jews was an attractive target for critics, who often hurled charges of anti-Semitism on the movement's adherents. Such condemnation was at best overstated.[60] Opponents often argued that the Identity denied that the Jews were

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[59]The sense of racial fraternity found in British-Israelism not only separated it from other racial-nationalist groups of the times but also from the modern Christian Identity movement which considers the Jews as either impostors or forfeiters of the promises. See James Coates, "A Book on the Workings of Hate Groups May Have Been an Inspiration for Terror," *Chicago Tribune*, 27 August 1995, sec. 4, p. 1, 4.

[60]Perhaps the closest element to anti-Semitism within British-Israel thought was the fact that it did divide the blessings and curses of God along strict house lines. The House of Israel (the British) would receive the blessings while the curses were to come upon the House of Judah. Though this certainly is rather antagonistic to the Jews, such an interpretation was not completely at variance from that held by both mainstream Christian churches and many Jewish congregations as well. According to mainstream Christianity, the Jews were under the curse incurred upon them by their rejection and crucifixion of Christ. The blessings were taken from the Jews and given to the people of Christ, or the Church. Even many Jews believed that they were being punished for their sins and looked forward to their restoration to God's favor with the coming of the Messiah at some future date. There was nearly universal agreement concerning the punishment of the Jews; the disagreement revolved around the ultimate fate of the blessings. Mainstream Christianity claimed them for the Church while the Jews looked forward to a time when they might receive them. British-Israelites, however, proposed that they were intended for the House of Israel and were now fulfilled in the British race. That such an interpretation was the height of arrogance, there could be no doubt, but it was not any more antagonistic to the Jews than that held by mainstream Christianity. It simply introduced a different recipient of the temporal blessings of God. See Rev. E. Bickersteth, *The Restoration of the Jews to Their Own Land, In Connection with Their Future Conversion and the Final Blessedness of Our Earth* (London: R. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1841), xix-xxi.

Israelites, placing that honor instead on the British race.[61] Furthermore, critics charged, British-Israelism bestowed all the promised blessings upon Britain while the Jews inherited all the curses. To interpret Scripture in this way denied the Jews their place in the divine plan as well as their ultimate restoration to their land and God's favor. The Identity, they claimed, fed off hatred towards the Jews and the desire to greedily take from them God's blessings. British-Israel as a whole, however, never denied the Jews their claim to be Israelites. To be an Israelite was to be descended from Jacob, which undoubtedly the Jews were. It was simply claimed that the Jews were but a segment of the whole people of Israel. All Jews were Israelites, they conceded, but not all Israelites were Jews; in the same way as "all Scots are British, but not all the British are Scots."[62] Jews were descendants from the southern kingdom while the British were from the ten northern tribes. All of them, however were from the family of Jacob and thus Israelites. The Jews were not only brothers to the British, but in the form of the Royal family, they ruled over them.

British-Israelites strongly denied the charge of anti-Semitism. When the charge appeared in any opponent's condemnation of the Identity,[63] it usually evoked rather emotional responses. "Mr. Clifford, of Bristol, wrongs us in many ways," an irate British-

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[61]John Wilkinson, *Englishmen Not Israelites. An Answer to "Twenty-Seven Identifications" and "Flashes of Light"* 2d ed. with an Appendix. (London: Haughton and Co., 1877).

[62]"I Am Not A Jew," *Banner of Israel* 6 (21 June 1882): 263.

[63]Rev. John Bryant Clifford, M.A., Vicar of St. Matthew's, *The Anglo-Saxons and the Israelites* (London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1879).

Israelite complained, "he asserts that *some of us have a bitter hatred towards the Jews.* Why the contrary is the truth. We look on them much more lovingly than ever we did aforetime." Jews were often invited to British-Israelite meetings to help in the elucidation of Old Testament prophecy and the Hebrew language. The Jews who attended such meetings, readers were informed, "have told us that we are the only Christians who would associate with them, and with whom they would associate."[64] British-Israelites also took great pride in the fact that the Jews were welcomed in England while they were being increasingly driven from the continent of Europe.[65] Surely, they concluded, this indicated an affinity and relationship with the tribe of Judah that other Europeans did not share.[66] In a strange twist of logic the perceived affinity between the Jews and the British explained, in the minds of several on the Continent, a great ethnological and political mystery. The French writers Raoul Bergot and Louis Martin, convinced of the identity of the British and the Israelites, believed that this was the reason for the inherent hatred the

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[64]John Gilder Shaw, *Israel! An Earnest Appeal from the Pew to the Pulpit in Favour of Our Identity With God's Elect People; Being a Letter to his Pastor, the Rev. Eustance R. Conder, M.A., Leeds. With and Introduction and Notes; also criticism of Rev. E. R. Conder's Papers on the "Lost Tribes" in the Evangelical Magazine* (London: S.W. Partridge, 1880), xvi.

[65]British-Israelites did overplay the sympathy of the British people for the Jews and underplay the anti-Semitism which was certainly present in Victorian Britain. It does seem fair to say, however, that hostility towards the Jews was less virulent and government policy more welcoming than in several other European nations. For discussions of the prevalence and nature of anti-Semitism in Britain see Anthony S. Wohl, "'Dizzi-Ben-Dizzi': Disraeli as Alien," *Journal of British Studies* 34 (July 1995): 375-411; and Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, 1876-1939 (London, 1979).

[66]Titcomb, *A Messsage to the Church*, 108-109; see also *Times* (London), 14 December 1885.

French held for both the Jews and the English.[67] "Our antagonism in regard to the Anglo-Saxons is an undeniable fact" Bergot proclaims; but "what is the reason for it?"[68] Adopting much British-Israel thought, both these writers explained that the national antipathy between France and Britain had emerged from a natural racial antipathy. The idea seemed to have more than a limited appeal. "The large portion of Frenchmen who cordially hate the English," the Dr. Emil Reich mentioned, "have, in an elaborate book written by one Louis Martin, given utterance to their firm belief that the English are Jews."[69] Reflecting not only a vituperative anti-Semitism in France, writings such as these indicate a contemporary Continental recognition that the British attitude towards the Jews was somehow different than those found in other parts of Europe. Indeed, by openly proclaiming a racial relationship between themselves and the Jews, British-Israelites presented a far different message from most of the anti-Semitic thought of Europe.

Proclamations of friendship only go so far. In very real and material ways, though, the British-Israel cause was active in work among the Jews in Britain. Such work, in their view, was a sacred trust founded upon racial kinship. Though the house of Judah was living under the curses prescribed by God, the British, as Israelites, had a special responsibility to take care of them and attempt to bring them to true religion. British-Israelites, in fact, were some of the most active workers among the Jews. One of the

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[67]Raoul Bergot, *De L'Origine Sémitique de Anglais* (Paris: Librairie Antisémite, 1903); Louis Martin, *L'Anglais: Est-Il un Juif?* (Paris: Nouvell Librarire Parisienne, 1895); idem, *L'Angleterre Suzeraine de la France*. Paris: Chamuel, 1896.

[68]Bergot, *De L'Origine Sémitique de Anglais*, i, 1-2.

[69]Dr. Emil Reich, "The Jew-Baiting on the Continent," *Nineteenth Century* 40 (September 1896): 437.

major writers and leaders of the cause, Edward Wheeler Bird (known most widely as Philo-Israel) was for many years the Treasurer of the Jews' Society in Bristol, which raised over £650 annually for missionary work among them.[70] British-Israel lecturers often held collections at the end of their presentations and donated the proceeds to Jewish charities.[71] Some of the most active promoters of the Identity were converted Jews who, despite their new-found faith, remained active in the Jewish community. The Rev. Marcus S. Bergmann, one of the vice-presidents of the Metropolitan, Provincial, and Colonial British-Israel Association, had converted from Judaism to the great distress of his family.[72] In studying the prophecies he had become convinced of the Identity and he wrote many articles and lectured around the country in its support. Bergmann remained, however, greatly committed to the Jews, working among them as a missionary for many years as well as being one of the first to translate the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, into Yiddish.[73] Other adherents took even more active roles among them. In an appeal for support and aid the Rev. John I. Jones gave the following account of the work being done among the Jews coming into England:

> The General Secretary of the British-Israel Association, [Rev. Samuel J. Deutschberger, M.A.] in addition to his other offices, is quietly pursuing a work

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[70]*Israel's Hope And Destiny. A Monthly Magazine Advocating the Identity of the British People with the Lost Ten Tribes* 1 (March 1880 ): 77.

[71]*Queensland Evangelical Standard* (Brisbane), 3 June 1882.

[72]Nathaniel Wiseman, *Marcus S. Bergmann: Translator of the Scriptures into Yiddish* (London: Marshall Bros., 1907).

[73]*Old Testament*, trans. M. S. Bergmann, rev. Aaron Bernstein (London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1898); *New Testament with Psalms*, trans. M. S. Bergmann (London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1912).

> which must commend itself to every descendant of Abraham, viz., that of succoring those who are driven, by persecution, from other lands to these hospitable shores of Britain. It is to be devoutly hoped that no parliamentary law will be framed to exclude them from our midst, for they are neither idle nor anarchical, but are the victims of the malignant hate of Gentile nations. . . . To aid and succour them, a movement has been started, called "The Industrial Mission to the Jews," of which Mr. Deutschberger is the promoter, and honorary secretary and director, eminently fitted for the post, not only because he is a son of Judah [a converted Jew] but also in virtue of his sympathetic and kindly nature. The other officers of the Mission comprise some of our leading British-Israel workers in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The scheme embraces three departments; viz., (1) The Evangelical, by which efforts are made for the conversion and salvation of these synagogue people; (2) Medical, whereby the sickly and the suffering may be healed; (3) Industrial, in order that these refugees may earn a livelihood, and the Mission become ultimately self-supporting.[74]

Once again, it should be noticed, the first focus of this Mission, as with others at the time such as the London Society for the Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, was the evangelical. The Jews were to be loved and accepted as fellow men but not as professors of the Jewish faith. As quickly as possible the race of the Jews should be converted to the Christian faith, even if the success of such conversions was often called into doubt.[75] Conversion was the greatest service which Christians, and especially fellow Israelites, could offer the Jewish people. In New York, Hermann Warszawiak, another converted Jew who was deeply involved in the missionary work to the Jewish community in that city, spoke favorably of the British-Israel theory in his magazine, the *Hebrew Christian.* "After much investigation," his answer to the query as to the fate of the tribes read, "it

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[74]*The Covenant People: A Monthly Expositor of the Prophecies Concerning the Two Houses of Israel and Judah and the Journal of the British-Israel Association* 11 (July 1904): 32-3.

[75]Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, chap 1.

seems that the Anglo-Saxon race may be the Lost Tribes of the House of Israel."[76] Others such as Eliezer Bassin and Solomon Feingold, the editor of the newspaper, *The Truth*, published out of Jerusalem, retained their Jewish faith and yet were convinced of the Identity. Both wrote in its favor and encouraged others to carefully consider its arguments and consequences.[77]

The most important of these consequences directly affecting the Jews was the restoration of the House of Judah to the Holy Land. This task was the particular imperative of the House of Israel. On this point, it seemed, the prophets were clear. At the appointed time the Jews would be reconciled to God by their acceptance of the Messiah. They would then walk to Israel, who would come into possession of the inheritance of their fathers. Israel would bring Judah into the promised land where they would, together, rule over the earth and come fully into the promises of Jacob.[78] Every imperial acquisition Britain made either in the Mediterranean, the Near East, or North Africa was a step towards the eventual annexation of the land of their ancestry. While British-Israelism was not in the main a millennialist movement, when the specter of millennialism did appear it usually took the form of a predicted reunion of the tribes and repossession of their land

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[76]"Questions," *Hebrew Christian* (New York) ed. Hermann Warszawiak (September 1894): 12. See also "The Lost Tribes of Israel: Theory that They Have Been Found in the Anglo-Saxon Race," *Hebrew Christian* (October 1895).

[77]Eliezer Bassin, *British and Jewish Fraternity: The Outline of the Reasons Which Convinced a Jew That the British People Are of the Tribes of Israel* 5th ed. (London: Robert Banks, 1895); Solomon Feingold, ed., "Where are Now the Ten Tribes of Israel?" *The Truth* (Mizpah, Jerusalem), 27 June 1910.

[78]Edward Hine, "Glory of Gathering the Jews," in, *England's Coming Glories* (Glasgow: H. Nisbet, 1873); see Isa. 11:12, Ezek. 37: 19, Jer. 3: 17-18.

rather than of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ. The only two dates which were widely accepted in British-Israel circles as points of millennial reference, 1882 and 1917, both saw steps towards this fulfillment. In 1882 the British took possession of Egypt, which, according to the prophecies, made up part of the promised land. When, in 1917, the British forces occupied much of Mesopotamia and Palestine and General Allenby triumphantly entered Jerusalem it appeared that the fullness of time was close at hand.[79] The Jews, therefore, were not excluded from the future dominion of the people of Israel yet they were, at least until their inevitable acceptance of Jesus Christ, to play a subordinate role. Imperial matters, taken in light of the millennial prophecies, were used by British-Israelites to further elucidate the place of Jews in British history and destiny.

Though the Identity championed the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land, this should not be understood to mean that it supported the Zionist movement. Zionism, British-Israelites claimed, worked from three misguided premises.[80] First, Zionism proceeded from the Jewish community. Its directors and finances came from Jewish quarters and its support was sought primarily from Jews. According to the prophecies, it was Israel, not Judah, who was to take the initiative in returning to the Holy Land. Any movement which originated from the Jews was doomed to failure. Second, Zionism was dedicated to the establishment of a "Jewish" homeland. Yet the promised land was given to both Judah *and* Israel. By denying the mandated presence of Israel in the Zionist vision,

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[79]Rev. Joseph Wild, D.D., *The Lost Ten Tribes and 1882* (London: Robert Banks, 1880); Henry G. Locke, *Conscientious Objections* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1918), 45-46.

[80]M. Graham Coltart, "Zionism," *Northern British-Israel Review* 5 (April 1915): 199.

the movement was contrary to the prophecies. Finally, since the Jews had not accepted Christ, they were not yet entitled to the land. God would restore all Israel at the appointed time, yet the Zionist movement incorrectly believed that the time was now at hand, and if God "will not restore them to the land from which they themselves acknowledge that they have been driven away on account of their sin, they will take the whole matter into their own hands and restore themselves."[81] Zionism was a corruption, not the fulfillment, of the Jews' return to the land of promise.[82]

At best the Jews played an uncomfortable, though critical, role in British-Israel thought. "When the Jews have not been hated with a passionate and fanatical hatred, as has been too commonly the case," the *Saturday Review* of 1882 reported,

> they have--at least in modern times--been loved with an equally strange and uncritical, though practically innocuous affection. And thus in our day a perfect literature has grown up on what is called the Anglo-Israel movement: and there is, we believe, an organised Society, with all the machinery of newspapers, public meetings, and the like, to advocate its claims, devoted to proving that the Lost Tribes have been found in England, and that the Jew is our brother in blood, if unhappily an alien in creed,

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[81]Rev. Marcus S. Bergmann, "The Zionist Movement: A Paper Read Before the Prophecy Investigation Society, April 29th, 1898," *The Covenant People* 4 (June 1898): 423.

[82]This attitude was and is not limited to the British-Israel movement. In fact, the Central Rabbinical Congress to this day publicly condemns the Zionist movement and the state of Israel. "Torah Jewry sees its exile from the Holy Land as the result of Divine decree," the proclamation explains. "The land was given to us according to God's will, and when our sins accumulated we were exiled from it. This exile is first and foremost a spiritual state that cannot and (as the Talmud teaches) must not be remedied by temporal means. Until God chooses to end history as we know it with redeeming us by miraculous acts, we are commanded by Him to live as co-operative, law-abiding and patriotic citizens in our countries of residence. Accordingly, the Jewish people have no 'claim' to the Holy Land at present. They have no right to conquer or rule over it." "A Clarification of Torah Doctrine Issued by the Central Rabbinical Congress of the U.S.A. & Canada," *New York Times*, 6 February 1994.

> and should be restored by English arms or diplomacy to the sacred soil which is his own.[83]

In explaining the Jews' history and destiny, British-Israelites were forced to confront and further define the two central issues of their theory: the racial and the imperial. It was their position on the Jews, furthermore, which set British-Israelism apart from other contemporary racial and imperial ideas. The Semitic origin of the British flew in the face of the common opinion of the Anglo-Saxon's Indo-European or 'Aryan' origin. The Jews, as fellow Hebrews, ceased to be aliens and became brethren, though the dispossessed portion of the Semitic family.[84] In this case the racial claim to empire was solidified. British-Israelism was able to assume for the Anglo-Saxon race all the Divine promises made to the Hebrews and never lose the central position of biological privilege. God may have denied the Jews their claims on account of their rejection of the Messiah, but never did the promises leave the possession of the children of Jacob. A Divinely-favored racial lineage reaching back for more than three thousand years was a far greater claim to greatness than the comparatively recent admixture of northern-European blood. Though British-Israelites did reject the traditional Christian paradigm of the Jew as the representative of a now-despised race, much of the uneasiness between the two peoples remained in their thought. The new view of British and Jewish fraternity served to illustrate, as the Saturday Review understood, "some occult tension in the relations of Jews and Chris-

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[83]"The Judenhass in History," *The Saturday Review* (London), 27 January 1882.

[84]Few British-Israelites claimed that the modern Jews were not Hebrews at all and thus were not entitled to the earthly promises. This interpretation, however, was far more common in the American Christian Identity movement. See Hannay, *European and Other Race Origins*, 18-19; and Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right.*

tians, which is apt to take the shape of paradoxical sympathy when it does not break out into a storm of fanatical antipathy."[85] For the British-Israelites to make their racial claim to imperial grandeur the Jews, long considered an alien people in Christian thought, had to assume a new role as racial kin. It was an idea which lacked almost any historical precedent and thus betrays a continued uneasiness concerning the function and place of the Jews in British national life; especially as that national life became increasingly defined in terms of the racial makeup of its people.

On the whole, then, these views made up the basis of British-Israel thought. Though by no means do they reflect every existing element or shade of opinion they do set up the most basic of outlines by which the movement was understood and presented. As would be expected, the theory was the target for much ridicule and objection by its contemporaries. Whether described as "a harmless delusion" or a "dangerous heresy" British-Israelism evoked a response and attracted attention.[86] Its propositions, so astonishing and *prima facie* ridiculous, invited the notice of many, the scorn of some, and the interest and belief of a not inconsiderable number. In and of itself, the fact that British-Israelism emerged and found many adherents might not warrant any investigation other than as a curiosity: a quaint and entertaining faith held by a credulous faction of the Victorian public. Yet an analysis of its nature and the makeup of its believers forces the the-

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[85]"The Judenhass in History," ibid.

[86]See Rev. Richard Cornall, M.A. Vicar of Emmanuel, Bristol, *The British Nation NOT Identical with the Lost Ten Tribes, 2nd ed. Containing Many Additional Proofs of the Fallacy of the Anglo-Israel Theory* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1877); Rev. Jasper Wilson, B.A., *Anglo-Israelism Not Necessary to the Fulfillment of Scripture and Prophecies. A Sermon Preached in the Methodist Church, Watford, on Sabbath Evening, December 6, 1885* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1886).

ory into a wider context. That such a belief could claim the minds of some millions of persons, from every social class and educational background does give reason to inquire further. The appeal of British-Israelism, it is clear, stemmed less from the inherent strength of its arguments than from its response to and explanation for the modern world. It was in its capacity as a guide to the underlying purpose of British dominance that the Identity emerged from the realm of Bible study and onto the broader stage of imperial and national concerns.

**The Nature of the Movement**

Though the Identity was heavily informed by religious ideas, it is not accurate to afford it the position of a religious doctrine. To even speak of *the* British-Israel theory is to take some liberty of terminology. The minute details of the Identity varied almost between adherents. Even the most basic elements of the Identity, as has been shown, were open to interpretation by individuals and groups. It is, therefore, almost impossible to give a complete description of the Identity; there are simply too many variations on a theme. In fact, much of the appeal of the theory, as well as many of its vulnerabilities, sprung from the permissiveness of interpretations which it allowed. In lectures, speeches, and writings the movement's leading figures could endorse or reject certain ideas and identifications but there were no structures in place, and very little desire, to impose a uniform doctrine. The movement never billed itself as a dogma, a sect, or a cult, and it never acted like one. This looseness of doctrine did at times cause confusion and animosity, yet even when some efforts were made to homogenize the message of the

Identity, these were by design extremely limited and still allowed for a wide variety of ideas.

The leaders of the Identity persistently reassured those interested in the theory that the belief was neither a sect nor a cult.[87] It was best understood, they explained, as a way to elucidate existing doctrine surrounding the prophecies. It demanded neither allegiance to its tenets nor the forsaking of the teachings of mainstream Protestant churches, except those relating to the fate of Israel. Many of the movement's leaders were Anglican and other Protestant clergy, ranging from local parsons to bishops of the Church of England, who saw no conflict between their ministry and their British-Israel beliefs. The theory never contradicted the fundamentals of Protestant doctrine. It never denied the divinity of Christ, the nature of the Trinity, or the salvation of the soul through grace. "We have no wish to form any new sect (there are already too many sects without adding to their number)," British-Israelites proclaimed, "for, as Dr. Wild so appositely says, 'The Anglo-Saxon-Israel theory neither destroys nor introduces any new principle, but discovers and applies that which has long been hidden.' Our Associations are composed of members of all denominations."[88] Unfortunately, this effort to reassure those opposed to the Identity that it posed no threat to existing doctrine led to other pitfalls. Since it was neither a sect nor cult and had none of their machinery, it allowed much latitude in the publication of

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[87]"Cult" was the common appellation given to the movement by outside observers. See, "Personal Notes," *Glasgow Daily Mail* (Glasgow), 15 January 1901; "Leading Article," *Ballarat Courier* [Ballarat, Victoria], quoted in *Banner of Israel* 23 (19 July 1899): 303.

[88]Shaw, *Israel! An Earnest Appeal*, viii. See Rev. Joseph Wild, D.D., *The Lost Ten Tribes and 1882* (London, Ont: J. O. Robinson, 1879), 188.

identifications and ideas. Even adherents realized that a number of these stretched the limits of reason and in the hands of opponents they were often used to discredit the Identity itself. Without wanting to quash any voices among its ranks apologists could only explain that,

> the British-Israelites have no creed but the Christian creeds, and no 'Inquisition' to stop the publication of books, pamphlets, and leaflets to disseminate truth as each Bible student sees it or thinks he sees it. Certainly there are some weak links in the chain of evidence which may have to be removed, and therefore, honest and honourable criticism will be always welcomed, but not the jaundiced visions of any sceptic in shepherd's clothing, sitting in the seat of the scornful, or walking in craftiness, handling the Word of God deceitfully.[89]

British-Israelites spent nearly as much of their time allaying fears of heresy and explaining away the discrepancies among its writers as in spreading the Identity itself.

Much of the misunderstanding surrounding the movement was the result of suspicion surrounding the aims of the Identity. These misgivings were heightened once the Identity took the form of organized societies. Their professed purpose, simply to disseminate the knowledge of the identity of the Anglo-Saxons with lost Israel, seemed somehow disingenuous to those who viewed the movement from the outside. Surely, they believed, there must be some political motivation behind these organizations. Support for the empire, for the continuation of the monarchy and traditional social structures, their opposition to social and economic unrest, and their deep admiration for Benjamin Disraeli put British-Israelites closely in line with the Conservative Party. Suspicious observers came to the belief that the theory at its core had been politically motivated and politically defined. Within the first few years of the founding of the Metropolitan Anglo-

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[89]Rev. Arthur Pritchard, M.A., *Truth Vindicated: A Racy-Rejoinder to Erith's So-called "British-Israel Fallacy"* (London: The Press Printers, 1922), 46.

Israel Association (1879), a publication of the English Baptist Church reported that "one main object of the association is to prove that the prophetical books of the Old Testament are devoted to a prediction, exposition, and defence of the Jingo policy of the late Benjamin [Disraeli] and his successors; that, indeed, the Bible, like Alison's *History of Europe*, is throughout written in the interests of the Tory party."[90] The *Pall Mall Gazette* explained that "there is a strong political colouring in the [Anglo-Israel Association's] directorate. Lord Folkestone and Major-General Burnaby are there, and the fighting services, which on the whole are decidedly 'anti-Radical,' are well represented. In suburban districts mysterious lecturers are appearing, under the patronage of leading Jingoes . . . the society has been in existence since 1878, when Anglo-Israelism in one sense was a reality in politics."[91] The *British Weekly*, in a series of articles entitled "A Life Study on Anglo-Israelism," came to the conclusion in its fourth segment that Identity believers were part and parcel of the Tory party.[92] The authentic connection between the Identity and politics, however, was rather difficult to discern. Though undoubtedly supportive of many of the planks in the Conservative Party platform, its forays into 'party politics' were rare.

The fundamental principles behind the theory, however, virtually assured at least an informal link between the movement and the Tory party. Virginia M. Cox, one of the

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[90]*The Freeman* (April 1882); quoted in *Israel's Hope and Destiny* 3 (May 1882): 143

[91]*Pall Mall Gazette* (London), April 1882; quoted in ibid., 141-2.

[92]"A Life Study of Anglo-Israelism: Part 4, 'Are Anglo-Israelites Tories?'," *British Weekly* (1890).

most prolific of British-Israel writers, understood the Identity as a guide to practical politics.

> One more good of our belief is that it affords a safe guide in many political matters, where we might, without direction, feel uncertain how to act. The *Banner* [*of Israel*] is no party organ; nor are we, as Anglo-Israelites, necessarily all of one name politically. But on many burning questions, such as that of Imperial Federation, of Home Rule, of the cession or retention of Uganda, &c., our knowledge of Our Identity will largely affect the formation of our opinions, and mould our course of action.[93]

At the first annual meeting of the Metropolitan Association (1879), a principal supporter and benefactor of the association proclaimed, "I still have one more favour to ask of you, not to forget at the next election to return as many Israelites [Conservatives] as you possibly can, because they are the best Protestants, to support the Earl of Beaconsfield, who, I believe, is not only the director of England, but the Governor of Europe, who ruled the Congress [of Berlin] entirely, and who has the management almost of Europe, Asia, and Africa, in his own hands; therefore, you must raise a beacon in every field, for Lord Beaconsfield, at the next election."[94] By 1886, British-Israelites proclaimed with pride that thousands of electors around the country voted solidly Conservative out of belief in their Israelitish identity and adherents were encouraged to join the Conservative Primrose League with its 100,000 members and strong political influence.[95] The League's purpose,

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[93]V. M. Cox, "The Good of It," *Banner of Israel* 17 (4 January 1893): 16.

[94]"Speech by Mr. W. H. Peters, J.P.," in Metropolitan Anglo-Israel Association, *Report of the First Annual Meeting Held at Exeter Hall, Strand, on Monday Evening, May 19th, 1879, Also Balance Sheet and List of Subscriptions* (London: Office of the Society, 1879), 25.

[95]*The Messenger: The Church, the Throne, the Empire. A Monthly Journal Devoted to the Elucidation of Prophecy and the Proofs of the Presence of Israel in Britain* 1 (July 1886): 118-19; for more on the Primrose League see Norman McCord, *British History, 1815-1906* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 384, *passim.*

adherents were told, "is to maintain the Church, the Throne, the Empire against Atheism and Republicanism;" these being causes dear to most British-Israelites' hearts as well.[96] On at least two occasions Col. Henry William John Senior delivered Identity lectures at the invitation of the Brooke Habitation of the Primrose League.[97] The marriage of the Identity to the Primrose League, however, had its limits. Though the lecture series were largely attended, even the editor of the *Banner* conceded that "people came willingly to hear a League lecture who would probably never had attended had the lectures been advertised as having reference to the subject of British-Israel!"[98] Sympathy of principles was hardly a guarantee towards the acceptance of the central thesis. Yet the sympathy was important. British-Israelism's success depended upon the pre-exiting convictions of its adherents, particularly those which upheld the importance of the empire. The Primrose League, and the Conservative Party as a whole, was a fountainhead of these convictions. British-Israelites were told to read the short-lived Tory journal *True Blue*, which, in turn, encouraged its readers to subscribe to the British-Israel magazine, *The Messenger.*[99] Though it was not in any real sense a political movement, the Identity could not remain aloof from, and indeed even depended upon, much of mainstream-Conservative opinion.

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[96]*The Messenger* 1 (July 1886): 89.

[97]"The Primrose League in the Colne Valley," *Huddersfield Chronicle* 17 February 1894; also, *Huddersfeild Weekly News* 20 November 1897.

[98]*Banner of Israel* 18 (21 March 1894): 150-51.

[99]*The Messenger* 1 (February 1887): 324.

Yet the attempt was usually made to keep strict party politics at arm's length if unable avoid them all together. The difficulty of this task lay in the fact that British-Israel by its very message and nature responded to and interpreted current (often political) events. In an attempt to distance adherents from party politics the chief organ of the belief, *The Banner of Israel*, denied that they were in any way officially allied with the Tory Party. The appearance of such an alliance, it explained, was simply because the Tories held to policies with which British-Israelites agreed; the foremost one being imperial expansion. "We applaud whatever advances this nation in the pathway of God's promises to the 'after seed' of Abraham, which this British-Israelite nation is," explained the editor of the Banner.

> Imperialism is the policy which God's Word proves is the destiny of Israel. We are Israel, and therefore, Imperialism is our destiny. It was because Lord Beaconsfield espoused that destiny for his country, and announced that policy as his ruling principle that we applauded his acts in the pages of the *Banner*. If Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal Party were to adopt that policy to-day . . . we should declare at once for Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal Party as worthy of our support, in the event of the Conservatives turning their backs upon such a rule.[100]

Imperial expansion was paramount to party loyalty. "We can assure our readers that party politics have no place in our magazine," adherents in Scotland were told. "Imperial matters, however, rightly claim a large share of our attention."[101] Imperial policy might indicate which party was pursuing Israel's destiny but, in the end, expansion itself depended upon God's will and not Parliament's actions. When Gladstone, who had campaigned against imperial expansion in 1880, found himself commanding government policies

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[100]*Banner of Israel* 6 (9 August 1882): 338.

[101]"Home Rule," *The Northern British Israel Review* 3 (October 1912): 115.

which further entrenched the British abroad, the *Banner of Israel* triumphantly proclaimed that:

> it has come to this. The Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone is causing the Stone Kingdom [Britain] to grow apace, and he who has ousted the late Lord Beaconsfield from office on the ground of the immoral policy which robbed other races of their lands, is now found adding to the Empire, first in Borneo, then in Egypt, now again in South Zululand! . . . We write these things not to cast blame on any particular government or party in our State, but simply to urge our readers to notice how God is working to carry out His purposes toward His people Israel. By Lord Beaconsfield's or by Mr. Gladstone's means, it matters not which, the British-Israelite Empire grows incessantly. Annexations which the Conservatives make the Liberals unmake; but, after a while, the latter are forced by the irony of fate to re-make them, at the cost of expense, rebellion, dissatisfaction from their own partisans, and to their own chagrin. They are "forced" as the *Times* expresses it, to adopt a 'forward policy,' meaning, we suppose, a Conservative method of carrying out Israel's destiny.[102]

There is no denying that the British-Israel movement favored the Conservative party over the Liberals. But the movement in and of itself was not political in the way, for example, that the Primrose League was. The concerns, policies, and visions of the Conservatives often mirrored those of British-Israelites and many who held Identity views most certainly found within them sanction for their political beliefs. And if it were true, as Goldwin Smith believed, that British-Israelism by 1890 had "arrived at the political dignity of being a 'vote' and of putting test questions to Parliamentary candidates," then it was more from the strength of British-Israelites' convictions and their willingness to vote in light of them then by any political maneuvering on behalf of the movement itself.[103]

If it appears that the nature of the belief was defined more by what it was not than by what it was, such a reading is considerably accurate. British-Israelism was extremely

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[102]*Banner of Israel* 7 (24 January 1883): 41-42.

[103]Goldwin Smith, ed., *The Bystander* (Toronto), January 1890: 134.

difficult to categorize. When speaking to audiences, its advocates often found it easier to explain their movement in terms of what it did not teach rather than in what it did. In March of 1918, Herbert Beckwith delivered a lecture to a large audience entitled "What is British-Israelism?" The local paper reported that,

> this was a very important question, in view of the great amount of misunderstanding in all directions, particularly in some unexpected quarters, and it might be easier to answer by asking what British-Israelism is not. Firstly, said the lecturer, it is not a new religion. All British-Israelites believe in Almighty God as their Father, Helper, and Guide, and that there is no other way of salvation other than the acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Neither was it a new theology; the old theology was good enough for them. It was not a new sect, for their numbers were drawn from both the Established Church and from nearly all denominations, and British-Israelism did not draw them away from the support of their individual Churches; it was supplementary thereto. Nor was it a new political party, for they had no politics, as such. They were only anxious God's hand should be recognised and realised in our national life today.[104]

What, then, was it? The ambiguity surrounding this question was both the great strength and the great weakness of the movement. The fact that it officially aligned itself with no particular Christian denomination and no particular political party opened its appeal to a larger number of people. It tread on no deeply held loyalties while it reinforced existing values and beliefs. British-Israelism was an opinion, or more accurately a collection of opinions. The permissiveness of interpretation which it allowed did often lead to confusion, but it also allowed those who might otherwise denounce the movement over minor doctrinal differences to remain within it to express their own ideas. British-Israelites

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[104]"What is British Israelism?" *The Shirley Advocate*, 25 March 1918.

were exceedingly loyal to the belief.[105] This was no doubt in part because the movement was highly tolerant of various interpretations and opinions.

Until 1919 there was no central authority which could exert control over the details of the theory. Those who held to the Israelitish origin of the Anglo-Saxons were generally lumped together as British-Israelites, despite the fact that they might hold extremely disparate views on the details of the Identity. The movement never had a single leader, or "prophet," who could set and reject doctrine. Even the officers and councils of its associations made decisions concerning the dissemination of the Identity rather than official pronouncements on the specifics of the belief. Though, as will be shown later, there were some efforts to homogenize the teachings of the Identity and thus present a united message to the world, these were never designed to completely quell differing views. The discovery of the Identity was believed to be a progressive process more than divine reve-

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[105]The vast majority of British-Israelites were adherents for years, usually until their death, even though they held quite disparate views. While there were some intense disagreements, the conviction among British-Israelites of their Hebrew origin was unshakable. The one exception which this author found was the Rev. Bouchier Wrey Savile, M.A., Rector of Shillingford. Savile wrote a small pamphlet in favor of the theory in 1879, *Are We Israelites? The Testimony of History, Philology, and Ethnology on the Subject.* With an Introduction by Philo-Israel (London: W.H. Guest, 1879). During the following year he came to the conclusion that the evidence for the identity was less than convincing and published several writings in opposition to it. *Anglo-Israelism and the Great Pyramid: An Examination of the Alleged Claims of H.M. Queen Victoria to the Throne of David; and of the Reason for Fixing the End of the Age in 1882* (London: Longmans & Co., 1880); *Letter to a Friend, The Reverend John Rowlands, M.A., Rector of Grimston, Norfolk, on the Anglo-Israel Theory, and the Alleged Advent of Christ in 1882* (London: Longmans and Co., 1882); *A Letter Addressed to the Rev. Edward Young, of Clifton, Respecting "Anglo-Israelism" (So-Called), and the Recent Action of the Editor of the "Banner of Israel"* (London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1883). This change of heart, while it embittered some adherents, was not brought on by doctrinal differences but by a complete rejection of the central thesis. However, this was by far the exception rather than the rule.

lation and therefore no one could claim a monopoly on the truth. Those who claimed some authority did so usually on the basis of "years of study" rather than on being especially appointed by God. Some informal controls over doctrine did exist. The editors of journals could decide which articles to print and what kinds of reviews to give British-Israel literature; the councils of the associations could decide which papers would be given at their meetings and who could be considered "authorized" lecturers for speaking engagements around the country. Yet unless the writings or lectures posed fundamental threats to the central tenets of the doctrine, even these informal controls were rarely called into action.

Despite the myriad of variations, those who accepted the fundamentals of British-Israelism did so out of deeply held convictions about the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race. Its appeal is simply not explicable in terms of real or imagined gain for those who embraced it. Neither spiritual salvation, political advancement, nor temporal prosperity (except that which would be bestowed upon the race as a whole) were used to tantalize people into accepting the faith. Its enticement stemmed instead from its ability to explain the growth of British dominance and promise its continuation. Like Jingoism, it depended upon racial and national pride as well as a firm faith in the British race as an important agent of God. British-Israel "enthusiasts," readers of the Glasgow *Daily Mail* were told, "are, curiously enough, what the world would call jingoes. Their Imperialistic tendencies are abnormally pronounced. They would, it may be assumed, scout the very suggestion that they should be impregnated with anything so rabid, and in every way so worldly as jingoism, but, so far as we can see, their special and specific Identity belief

amounts in every effect very much to the same thing."[106] The author's assessment of the reaction of British-Israelites towards the charge of jingoism is, in fact, substantially correct. Most of them did look askance at British expansion for expansion's sake and, despite the obvious racial pride which motivated the movement, the adherents stressed the responsibilities which the Identity bestowed upon the race over its privileges.[107] These protestations not withstanding, it was the creation of a glorious imperial-racial identity which not only gave the movement a firm place in contemporary thought but which served also as the primary motivation for those who adopted and kept the faith of British-Israel.

**Keepers of the Faith**

Much of British-Israel's historical importance is derived from both the extent and nature of its appeal. An analysis of those who accepted the theory serves to situate it within the larger contemporary mind-set. Its ability to cross the boundaries of culture, class, gender, religion and even the oceans strengthens the conclusion that British-Israelism was a racial rather than a political, religious or even a strictly national movement. Since it never preached revolution or social upheaval it appealed to those with a vested interest in social stability. Yet as it also spoke of the universal prosperity and the triumph of the Anglo-Saxon race, its appeal extended much further. British-Israelites never tailored their message to appeal to one particular section of society but to the British people as a whole. While the movement was extremely proud of the more well-

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[106]"Personal Notes," *Daily Mail* (Glasgow), 15 January 1901.

[107]An Israelite [R. Douglas], *The Ten Tribes: Where Are They Not and Where Are They? A Reply to J. Wilkinson* (London: William Poole, 1882), 15.

known and respected of its adherents, this pride stemmed usually from a hope that their convictions might help in the ultimate conversion of everyone throughout the Anglo-Saxon world.[108] Viscount Folkestone, the president of the Metropolitan British-Israel Association, understood the universality of the belief's importance when he declared that "what we preach and teach is for every one and for every Christian denomination, whether of the Church of England or of the Dissenting classes; it is not for one class, it is not for the aristocracy, nor for the poor alone, but it is for every one of the people of England."[109] The power of the message, its appeal to racial pride and identity, and its explanations for existing and future greatness reached through the traditional divisions of religion, class, and gender. The theory gained footholds in all sections of society, from the working classes to the upper class. It was held by men and women, Anglicans, Dissenters, Jews, and Catholics, the young and the old. The profile of a British-Israelite closely reflected a cross-section of the empire.

It is impossible to obtain an accurate count of those who held British-Israel beliefs. As will be seen in chapter three, the associations at their height could only claim a total membership of one or two thousand. But by all accounts adherents and sympathizers numbered from the hundreds of thousands to the millions. As explained above, it was difficult for the movement's leaders to attract believers into the organizations and convince them to spend the money and time in the furtherance of a poorly-defined cause. Yet

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[108]"Address by Herbert Garrison, Esq., F.R.G.S., F.R.C.I.," *British-Israel World Federation Congress, July 5-10, 1920* (London: Imperial British-Israel Association, 1920), 11-12.

[109]Right Hon. Viscount Folkestone, M.P., "The Search for the Lost Tribes," *The Anglo-Israel Almanack for the Year* 1889, 10.

it is evident from the amount of literature sold and the attendance at the lectures that interest in the movement was acute. Several British-Israel works sold tens of thousands of copies. It was not uncommon for lectures in all parts of the country and empire to attract 500 to a thousand or more people. Moreover, it should be noted that these lectures were not revival meetings. They did not depend upon an appeal to emotionalism to attract crowds. From the accounts of them given in the local papers, it is clear that they were straight instructional lessons often complete with maps and charts to elucidate the lecturer's points. In 1877 one of the most popular lecturers, Edward Hine, gave a talk in Scotland. A local merchant presided over the meeting, and, "in introducing Mr. Hine, explained that Mr. Hine came amongst us, not to proselytize but to make thinkers, and he conceived it to be a greater triumph to truth to make a thinker than to make a proselyte."[110] The articles printed in British-Israel journals were more often exegetical than sensational, detailing complex scriptural and historical problems. Yet despite their sometimes dry pedagogic nature, the lectures attracted rather large crowds and the journals had a considerable readership. Almost without exception, outside observers, whether critical or sympathetic, were compelled to admit that the appeal of British-Israelism was strong and that the belief was certainly expanding. "The belief that the British Empire and the kingdom or House of Israel are identical," the *Brighton Argus* reported, "is rapidly spreading in this country."[111] In Dublin, the readers of the *Daily Express* discovered

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[110]"The Lost Tribes," *Dumfries and Galloway Standard*; quoted in *The Nation's Glory Leader, by Identifying the British People with the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel* 4 (Wednesday, April 4, 1877): 89.

[111]Review of *British-Israel Truth*, ed. by Denis Hanan and Herbert Aldersmith, in *Brighton Argus*, 2 June 1891.

that, "the theory that the English nation is nothing less than the lost Tribes of Israel has obtained a place for itself among the debatable questions of the day. It is discussed in Quarterlies, and defended by men of ability, so that whatever our opinion may be, it is plain that the subject can no longer be ignored."[112] From the Antipodes to Canada, Colonials were informed of a "steadily growing body, which believes that the lost Ten Tribes of Israel and the Anglo-Saxon race are one and the same people."[113] The message of British-Israelism, disseminated as it was through both the written and spoken word, did not fall upon deaf ears.

Of course not everyone who read the literature or attended the lectures went away a confirmed British-Israelite. Yet the literature continued to sell, and the papers nearly always reported that the lectures met with a good reception. Its strongly suggestive arguments, the great latitude of opinion which it allowed, and the few obligations which it involved made it attractive and easily accepted by a wide range of people. Not a few who dismissed the belief at first found themselves persuaded after giving it a second look. Professor Edward Odlum, like many, became convinced of the truth of the subject in spite of himself:

> eventually I ran across the various works on the Anglo-Israel teaching, and at first I laughed at it, and made ready to master and attack it openly. However, I found that my judgment was captured by straight and marvellous array of facts of the many

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[112]Review of *Israel: A Thesis*, by Rev. Denis Hanan, D.D., in *Daily Express* (Dublin), 23 August 1889.

[113]"Rev. Idrisyn Jones' Arrival at Melbourne," *Melbourne Herald*, 12 April, 1899. See also *Australian Christian World* (Brisbane), 9 June 1899; "By the Way," *Daily News* (Toronto), 16 April 1888; *Gippsland Times* (Western Australia), 22 October 1886; "St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town," *Uitenhage Times* (Cape Town), 29 April 1899; "Leading Article," *Ballarat Courier* (Victoria); quoted in *Banner of Israel* 23 (19 July 1899): 303.

> writers on the subject, and in the end I took it up in an exhaustive manner. Now at the end of nearly thirty years of hard and patient study, the proofs that we, the Anglo-Saxon peoples, are the ancient Ten-tribed House of Israel, in *a national and official sense*, is as clear to my mind as the noon-day sun is to the eyes of mortals.[114]

Bishop Titcomb conceded that the natural first reaction to the theory, as it had been with him, was ridicule and even scorn. He hoped however, that if inquirers were to "peruse [the] evidence as carefully as it has been thought out, they may possibly change their opinion. Thousands who have begun by caviling, have ended with conviction; and for the most part, those who have not become convinced have failed only because they were without sufficient patience to go through an examination of the subject carefully."[115] Conversion tales were quite popular in British-Israel literature making up a good number of letters to the editor in Identity periodicals and forming the prefaces to many monographs. Most of them followed the model of William Melor who told the story of his conversion in the Correspondence section of the *Banner of Israel.*[116] Melor had acquired a copy of the *Banner* by mistake from a railway bookstall and after reading it found it to be at best humorous nonsense: "Surely, I thought, it must be written by a lunatic for a constituency of imbeciles." After several weeks of purchasing the journal, asking for it at the bookseller "in the same subdued tone a youth employs for his first half-ounce of tobacco," in the hope of recapturing the jocularity of his first experience, Melor found the proof overwhelming and his conversion complete. Those who recounted their conver-

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[114]Professor E. Odlum, M.A., B.Sc., F.R.C.Inst., &c., *God's Covenant Man: British-Israel* (London: Robert Banks & Son, Toronto: William Briggs, 1916), v.

[115]Titcomb, *A Message to the Church*, xii.

[116]"Correspondence," *Banner of Israel* 3 (6 August 1879): 320.

sions nearly always indicated a similar experience: the initial lunacy surrounding the central thesis dissolved in light of the facts of British dominance.[117]

That British-Israelism could excite the minds of persons regardless of social class is quite clear. The working classes, usually seen as supporters of social reform movements, seemed eager to hold to a theory strongly favoring the status quo. The lectures, usually given with no admission charge, attracted large numbers from the working classes. "The theory is finding adherents;" a local paper reported, "and it is becoming peculiarly acceptable to the working classes. The announcement that Mr. Hine would deliver a course of lectures upon the subject in Portadown excited considerable interest; and accordingly, on Wednesday evening, his first lecture was delivered to a very large audience, composed mainly of the intelligent artisan class."[118] In 1886, Charles Piazzi Smyth received a letter from John Fronde, librarian of the Free Public Library & Museum, Barrow in Furness, Scotland. Fronde had been making inquiries as to "what people will read" in order to purchase books accordingly. When he came across the library's copy of Piazzi Smyth's *Our Inheritance* he took special notice. "I find the book has been lent out 147 times in three years for hours of reading [an average of once every seven days]," he wrote. "Our readers," he continues, "are almost entirely made up of the working classes. The book is

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[117]For other conversion stories see Rev. Robert Polwhele, Vicar of Avenbury, *The English the Descendants of "The Ten Tribes:" A Lecture. Dedicated by Permission to the Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G.* (London: S.W. Partridge & Co., 1873), 11; A Sylvester, *The Heir of the World, or The Nations of Europe as Descended From Abraham: The Cymry and the Gael* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1876), ix-x; Shaw, *Israel! An Earnest Appeal from the Pew to the Pulpit*, 24-25; Rev. Ira M. Condit, M.A., *The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel Found in the Anglo-Saxon Race*, 4th ed. (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1910), 3.

[118]*Portadown and Lurgan News*, 31 March 1877.

the fourth (1880) edition."[119] It was also not unknown for working-class men, "after the toil of the day was done," to meet in special study groups and inquire into the subject further, "not to believe what they were told, but by their own investigation to prove what they were told . . . was in accordance with the scriptures."[120]

An instructive case of this appeal to the working classes revolves around the experiences of the Methodist minister of St. Ives, Cornwall, the Rev. Henry Roe. In 1883, the Methodist Conference assigned Roe to superintend the St. Ives circuit. The once powerful area had, by the closing of tin mines and the removal of many families, nearly come to ruin. The remaining families were quite poor and the whole circuit had been losing money for the past few years. The officers of the circuit declared that the coming year would see either the complete ruin or resurrection of the Methodist church in St. Ives. Roe remembers the task which lay before him in this way:

> Night by night I walked alone on the Portminster beach to meditate and form my plans, and there I believe my Sunday morning plan was born. Though I had never ventured the like before, and had but little preparation, I publicly announced that I would explain a Scripture lesson on the British Race, Colonies, and Empire, as Israel, to the St. Ives congregation every Sabbath morning as long as I remained in the town, or till the people wished otherwise.

Fishermen, sea captains, and working men attended in numbers not seen for quite some time. "And so, instead of a nearly empty church, was a good sized congregation, composed chiefly of men, looking like one vast Bible class. Thus were spent forty-two out of

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[119]John Fronde, Librarian, Free Public Library & Museum, Barrow in Furness to C. Piazzi Smyth, Edinburgh, 27 July 1886. Archives of the Royal Observatory Edinburgh, A15.71. The fourth edition of *Our Inheritance* is strongly British-Israelitish in nature.

[120]"The Eastern Question and Our Israelitish Origin: Report of a Lecture given by Edward Hine in the Forrester's Hall. Margate," *The Nation's Glory Leader* 4 (March 21 1877): 66.

the fifty-two Sunday mornings of my first year at Cornwall." Moreover, the circuit which had been running a deficit for years past was now back in the black, the Sunday offerings from Roe's congregation alone for that year being greater than all income from the circuit's five churches from the year prior to his arrival. "Surely," Roe exclaimed, "that ought to draw some preachers, even if the light cannot. With this increased prosperity, many former debts have been paid, the officers have again lifted up their heads, and the minister has had one of the happiest years of his life. Is that ruin or resurrection?" Roe delivered sixty-three British-Israel lectures in his first seventeen months at St. Ives.[121] By 1885, he reported that, "in this way I have spent ninety-seven Sabbath mornings in the same church, with as many Identity lessons as sermons on Christ. At one of our largest circuit quarterly meetings the officers unanimously signed a request for me to continue this order of ministry, which I promised to do so long as God gives me fresh subjects."[122] The Identity achieved something which traditional sermons had failed to do; it had infused religious life and imperial interest into the working classes of St. Ives.

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[121]Rev. Henry Roe, St. Ives Cornwall, *Israel's World: Origin and Destiny of the British Race, Colonies and Empire, According to Scripture, History, Language, and Signs of Our Times*, 12th thousand (London: Elliott Stock, 1884), 21-25.

[122]Henry Roe, "Ministry and Identity," *Anglo-Israel Almanack for the Year 1886*, 46-47. Despite nearly universal approval from Roe's congregation, he was removed from his ministry by the national Methodist Conference on account of his Identity teachings. Roe promised not to preach on the subject again in order to retain his vocation and he was reassigned to the Methodist church in Dawley, Sallop. The editor of the *Banner of Israel*, in response to this event remarked, "Our Identity does not demand martyrdom from those who believe it; and therefore, while we regret the stress which had been put unjustly (as we believe) on our friend, we do not blame him for submitting, seeing that the alternative was ruin and starvation to himself and to his young and innocent children." "The Rev. Henry Roe," *Banner of Israel* 10 (18 August 1886): 329.

Yet if it were only the working classes which were drawn to the theory, critics might be justified in making the case, as they sometimes did, that the theory appealed to those people "not qualified to judge for themselves" of the veracity of the Identity.[123] Its propositions, they contended, were "not calculated to produce the slightest effect on the opinion of those competent to form one," and that their appeal to novelty and national pride "take well with a narrow-minded public."[124] This was, however, far from the truth. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the wide social appeal of the belief was being widely recognised. Its adherents, the *Glamorgan County Times* explained, not only numbered into the millions but also "are found among all conditions of men; bishops, canons, archdeacons, rectors, vicars, prebendaries; doctors, solicitors, barristers, Army and Navy officers, merchants, university men, authors, travellers, traders, are amongst those who have gladly accepted as a truth that the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel are now found in Europe."[125] The *Toronto Daily Star* informed its readers that, "whether what the Anglo-Israel Association stands for is correct or not, it is certain that many thousands of people believe in it. Those who do believe are necessarily well-read people, . . . Many prominent men in professional, business, and church lines are ardent believers, and

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[123]Erith, *The British-Israel Fallacy*, 3.

[124]Rev. Canon George Rawlinson, "Where Are the Ten Tribes," *Leisure Hour* 21 (6 July 1872): 426; Spiritus Sanctus, *The Twelve Tribes Identified and England's Success Fully Accounted For. Also a Critical Examination of the 27 Identifications Given by Edward Hine, Entitled Cui Bono? or, What is the Good of Misrepresentations in Divine Things?* (London: Haughton & Co., 1880), iv.

[125]Review of *Memoirs and a Selection of Letters From the Correspondence of Edward Hine*, by Ben-Israel, in *Glamorgan County Times*; quoted in, *Banner of Israel* 34 (30 March 1910): 146.

are to be found at every meeting."[126] "Perhaps many of our numerous readers are as yet unaware of the fact," the editor of *The Truth* explained, "that there is now existing in Great Britain a remarkable body of people composed of hundreds of thousands of deep-thinking men--philosophers, theologians, politicians and authors who denominate themselves British-Israelites and positively maintain that in the British nation are found the lineal descendants of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel."[127] Middle class professionals were, in fact, the lifeblood of the organised movement. They made up the bulk of the members and active workers, having both the money and the time to further the cause. Middle class women were especially active in the organised movement. Though most of the officers and council members of the organization were men, women were often the primary foot soldiers in charge of special funds and organizing the meetings.[128] Yet the movement was never officially divided along gender lines. Full membership was granted to both men and women and the leaders recommended that "the Committee [of local associations] should consist of ladies as well as gentlemen, where practicable." Though they did admit that "in some cases local prejudice may be opposed to this composition."[129] In

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[126]*Toronto Daily Star*, 4 December 1909.

[127]Feingold, "Where Are Now the Ten Tribes of Israel."

[128]It was usually the ladies who organized the local meetings, especially the smaller drawing-room gatherings. Eleanor M. Rush not only was in charge of the British-Israel Scripture and Prayer Union, but was also the chief coordinator of the Anglo-Israel Free Distribution Fund, responsible for the printing, purchasing, and distribution of literature.

[129]Rev. J. Billington, F.R.H.S., "How to Form and Carry on Local Anglo-Israel Auxiliaries to the London Parent Society," in, Metropolitan Anglo-Israel Association. *Report for the Year Ending 30th April, 1880, Containing Prospectus, Rules, Balance Sheet, List of Subscribers, and Account of Proceedings at the Second Annual Meeting,*

fact, British-Israelites took great pride in their equal (some would suggest preferential) treatment of women, tracing this attitude back to their Anglo-Saxon and Israelite ancestors.[130] It was the professionals however, and thus usually men, who were most touted as the promoters of the Identity. Their occupations, titles, educational background, and social status helped to lend the movement an air of credibility.

In truth, the movement did attract many from the highest educational and social background. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge were well represented in the movement. The Rev. Walter Metcalf Holmes Milner, one of the most active of the movement's leaders, had graduated first honors in classics and history from Queen's College, Oxford in 1882. The Rev Arthur Pritchard received his Masters degree in 1886 from Oxford's Balliol College.[131] The Rev. Alfred J. J. Cachemaille, the Rev. S. J. Deutschberger, and the Rev. A. B. Grimaldi all received their Master's degrees from Cambridge, Cachemaille and Grimaldi coming out of the same college. Doctors of Di-

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*Held at Exeter Hall, on Tuesday Evening, 1st June, 1880* (London: Office of the Society, 1880), 14.

[130]T. K. de Verdon, *The Veil Lifted From All Nations. Israelitish Origin of the English and Prussians: Proof the English Nation and the Anglo-Saxons of America are of the House of Joseph of the Tribe of Ephraim; and that the Prussians and Other Germans Are of the House of Joseph of the Tribe of Manasseh* (London: Elliot Stock, 1872); J. E. Hendley, *England: Heir of the World* (London: Elliot Stock, 1894), 99-100; Rev. Robert Douglas, M.A., *A British-Ephraim Catechism: Biblical, Historical, and Prophetic*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1911), 15-16.

[131]*Alumni Oronienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886. Their Parentage, Birthplace, and Year of Birth, with a Record of their Degrees*, vol. 3 (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1968); *The Historical Register of the University of Oxford. Being a Supplement to the Oxford University Calendar, with and Alphabetical Record of University Honours and Distinctions Completed to the End of Trinity Term 1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900).

vinity were often convinced of the scriptural arguments, and several Fellows of the Royal Historical and Geographical Societies found history and geography to evince traces of the tribes in the Anglo-Saxon's heritage. Mabel Bent, who had with her husband, Theodore, become famous for extensive travels through the Near East and Africa had been "since my girlhood convinced of the truth that the English race and the House of Israel are identical." Bent's journeys to the Promised Land had only reconfirmed her belief in Britain's Israelitish descent.[132] Medical doctors, scientists, and legal scholars reviewed the evidence and were satisfied in the strength of these conclusions. The military presence was also quite marked, with admirals, generals, colonels and captains serving on the boards of the associations and actively promoting the Identity among their countrymen. The Identity, *The Review of Reviews* remarked, "numbers among its adherents many persons of the highest rank, and some who have rendered the State great service in the Army, the Navy, and the Law."[133] Whatever else these people were, it is doubtful that they could be considered, as they were sometimes called, "weak-minded eccentrics" or "crazy."[134] Critics at times charged that the theory's allure probably derived from its irrational appeal or that it possessed "a strange charm. It enchanted as might the *Arabian Nights* in an opium par-

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[132]Mabel Virginia Anna Bent, "Autobiographical Note," *M.A.P.* 17 January 1903; also idem, *Anglo-Saxons From Palestine: Or, the Imperial Mystery of the Lost Tribes* (London: Sherrat and Hughes, 1908). See also *Who was Who*, vol. 3, s.v. Bent, Mrs. Theodore (Mabel Virginia Anna).

[133]"Character Sketch. Queen Mary: The Mother on the Throne," *The Review of Reviews* (London) 42 (August 1910): 132.

[134]*Freeman*, April 1882; quoted in, *Israel's Hope and Destiny* 3 (May 1882): 143; "The Standard of Israel," *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art* 42 (October 21 1876): 506.

lor."[135] Such dismissals, however, are not sufficient to explain the attention it received from the educated and 'respectable' classes in Britain and the empire, and throughout Europe.[136]

Though it cannot be shown with any certainty that the belief influenced the policies of the nation and empire, prominent politicians were to be found in British-Israel circles. Members of both Houses of Parliament held sway in the movement. Among the peers, Reginald Brabazon the 12th Earl of Meath, the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Gisborough, and the Earl of Dysart topped the list of its Patrons. In the Commons, Major General Burnaby, Viscount Folkestone, Colonel Thomas Myles Sandys, and Captain John Evans Freke-Aylmer, all of whom, not surprisingly, were from the Conservative Party, served as council members and officers of various Identity organizations. From the time of the First World War the Prime Minister of New Zealand, William F. Massey, who had always been a devout man, became convinced of the British-Israel theory and from this be-

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[135]Wilber F. Steele, "A Divine Romance," *Methodist Review* 80 (March 1898): 215.

[136]The attention and advocacy of British-Israelism, curiously enough, was not limited to the Anglo-Saxon world. Works such as Seraphino Beruatto, *Britannia-Israel Ossia gli Ebrei nella Questione d'Oriente* (Roma: 1880); Marie Sinclair, Countess of Caithness and Duchess of Pomar, *Thésophie Sèmitique. Les Vrais Israélites: L'Identification des Dix Trus Perdues Avec la Nation Britannique* (Paris: Librarie Georges Carré, 1888); and Chas. LaGrange, Membre de l'Academie Royale de Belgique, *The Great Pyramid, By Modern Modern Science, an Independent Witness, to the Literal Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, & British-Israel Identity*, trans. from the French by the author (London: Charles Burnet and Co., 1894) considered the idea to hold great truth, whereas D. Paulus Cassel in his *Ueber die Abstammung der Englische Nation* (Berlin: 1880), found it an amusing yet insightful look at the British mind-set. See also E. LaGrange, "L'Angleterre et Israel," *Revue de Belgique* année 23, ser. 2, tome 3 (1891): 257-85; and John Millen, *Pa Ratta Vagar: Davis Forntida Stad Upptackt; Israels tio Stammar Aterfunna icke Judarna* (Stockholm, 1917).

lief "developed an almost mystical belief in the permanency of the empire."[137] He later served as a Patron to the British-Israel World Federation. It was even asserted, and not always by British-Israelites, that Benjamin Disraeli had been interested in the Identity.[138] British-Israel was a theory, James Blair Forgan claimed in a review of Piazzi Smyth's 5th edition of *Our Inheritance*, "which Lord Beaconsfield believed thoroughly in, and the arguments adduced by Piazzi Smyth are by no means to be lightly passed over."[139] Whether or not Disraeli believed in the theory is not known for certain, but British-Israelites nevertheless admired him, not only for his Jewish heritage but for his imperial policies and would certainly have welcomed him into their fold.[140]

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[137]A. H. McLintock, ed., *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, s.v. "Massey, William Ferguson (1856-1925)."

[138]It is probable that Disraeli's novels, particularly *Coningsby* (1844) and *Tancred* (1847), provided the substance which led to this conclusion. Disraeli did assert within these works the close connection between the British and Hebrew races both culturally and historically. There is nothing to suggest, however, that he accepted or was even aware of the British-Israel theory. See Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, chap. 5.

[139]James Blair Forgan, "Review of *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid*, 5th ed., by Charles Piazzi Smyth," *Rod and Gun* (December 27, 1890): 598.

[140]The admiration which British-Israelites held for Disraeli was unique in that it resulted from both his imperial policies as well as his Jewish descent, not in spite of it. Both Disraeli's opponents and supporters often looked at his Hebrew ancestry as being at best an impediment and usually as a danger to his service to the nation. Wohl, "Dizzi-Ben-Dizzi," 395-403. The allegation of Disraeli's acceptance of the theory was not the sole example of the press suggesting adherence on the part of public figures. The connection between the Identity and imperialism was so close that it was often assumed that such people as Lord Kitchener, Alfred Milner, and Rudyard Kipling were British-Israelites simply on account of their imperial views. "The Lost Tribes of Israel: Does Britain Comprise Them?" *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 5 February 1917; "British-Israel Lecture," *Dungannon News*, 6 May 1909; "Why Am I A Zionist," *Sheffield Daily Independent*, 7 March 1919.

The theory seemed to hold a particular attraction for members of the military. Indeed, the armed forces supplied a good number of authors and propagators of British-Israel thought. Outside the ranks of common soldiers and seamen, the services were represented by the very top officers. At least two members of the prominent military family, the Beresfords, were highly active in the spread of the theory.[141] General Lord Roberts, Field-Marshall during the Boer War and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's forces at the beginning of the First World War, and his brother, General G. R. Roberts, both found the theory enlightening and persuasive. In a speech to the Young Men's Christian Association of Belfast in 1900, General George Roberts confessed that "no one could have been more sceptical about the connection of the Anglo-Saxon race with the Ten Tribes of Israel" when he first became aware of it. Yet "after careful study, he had long since been thoroughly convinced of the absolute truth of the 'identity,' and was prepared to stake his very existence on the fact."[142] In the navy, a number of admirals became highly involved with the theory. Along with the lesser-known Admirals Alexander Dunn, Norman B. Bedingfield, and Rear-Admiral Hubert Campion, the more prominent Admiral Sir Richard H. Peirse, K.C.B., K.B.E. was quite active in the movement. Furthermore, three Admirals of the Fleet, the right Hon. Sir John Jellicoe, who also served as Governor General of New Zealand and thus shared the faith with Prime Minister Massey, Admiral Sir

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[141]Both Leiut-Gen. Mostyn de la Poer Beresford and General W.H. Beresford were subscribers, lecturers, and officers of British-Israel associations.

[142]"British Israel Association--Meeting in Belfast," *Northern Whig* (Belfast), 31 August 1900; see also Rev. Hector MacTurk, M.A., "Report of Proceedings at the Annual Conference of the Imperial British Israel Association, Held May 5-6 Caxton Hall, Westminster," *Banner of Israel* 39 (6 May 1915): 226.

Doveton Sturdee, Bart., K.C.B. and Admiral Lord Fisher professed their thoughts in favor or Britain's Israelitish origin. Fisher expressed his belief on numerous occasions both in public and in his private letters, including two letters to the *Times* and his memoirs. Like many British-Israelites, Fisher was greatly impressed with the prophetic implications of the fact that by the end of the First World War Britain held Jerusalem. This, he believed, was only further confirmation of the Identity. Jerusalem, he proclaimed, should serve as the capital of a federated Empire or Anglo-Saxon union since, he believed, it had been the capital of Israel "whom we are without a doubt."[143] A devoutly religious man, Fisher saw the hand of God acting on behalf of the British in their victory over the Germans. In a letter to Jellicoe dated April 29th, 1916, he took comfort in the fact that "our faith is the same, my beloved Jellicoe, and the only reason we shall win this War is because we are the Lost 10 Tribes of Israel!"[144] "The only hypothesis," he later asserted, "to explain why we win in spite of incredible blunders is that we are the lost tribes of Israel."[145] Despite

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[143]Lord Fisher, Admiral of the Fleet, *Memories* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), 223, and Arthur J. Marder, ed., *Fear God and Dread Nought: The Correspondence of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone*, vol. 3, *Restoration, Abdication, and Last Years, 1914-1920* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), 580-81, n. 1; see also "A Character Study of Admiral Sir John Fisher," *The Daily News* (London), 17 July 1909; Harold Begbie, "The Man the Kaiser Feared," *Daily Chronicle* (London), 18 December 1918; "To the Editor of the *Times*," *Times* (London) 21 October 1919.

[144]Marder, ed., *Fear God and Dread* Nought, 3: 343.

[145]"A Fine Old Hen that Hatched the American Eagle--Letter to the Editor by Lord Fisher," *Times* (London) Wednesday, 7 May 1919. See also *Dictionary of National Biography: Twentieth Century 1912-1921*, sv. "Fisher, Jonathan Arbuthnot."

his fear of governmental bumbling, Fisher retained a faith in what he called an "Anglo-Israelitish Providence" which guarded and protected the British Empire.[146]

For a movement involving intensely religious issues it was important to have influential clergy on its side. While the Identity could not claim the official favor of the Church of England it did find sympathy among many of its representatives. Several bishops (mostly colonial), including Bishop William Bennett Bond, the Primate of all Canada, either were confirmed British-Israelites or at least recognized the importance of the belief and "regretted the clergy did not give the matter the study it deserved, especially as so many in their congregations were deeply interested in it."[147] Even the *Church of England Pulpit and Ecclesiastical Review* afforded the movement an extended and rather favorable review. "For many years past a growing interest in the question and present whereabouts of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel has been making itself felt in the minds of not an inconsiderable section of the community," the article begins:

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[146]Marder, ed., *Fear God and Dread Nought*, vol. 2., *Years of Power, 1904-1914* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), 367. Fisher spoke to a number of friends and colleagues concerning his faith including Archibald S. Hurd, Sir William Watson, the Earl of Rosebery, George Lambert, Edward A. Goulding, Arnold White, Mrs. Reginald McKenna, Viscount Esher, and the active British-Israel worker, Lady Radnor. See, *Fear God and Dread Nought*, vol. 2: 416-17, 433-34, 453-54; vol. 3: 334-35, 464, 489-90, 507, 539-41.

[147]Speech of Right Rev. Bishop Beckle, Chair at a British Israel Lecture Held in the St. Leonard's Assembly Room by Mr. H. H. Pain, Thursday February 4, *Hastings and St. Leonard's News*, February 1897; reprinted in, *The Covenant People* 3 (March 1897): 322. Other Anglican bishops who either held to the theory or recognized its importance were Samuel Gobat (Jerusalem); Jonathan Holt Titcomb (Rangoon); Norman Stewart De Jersey (Falkland Islands); and the Roman Catholic Bishop John Stephen Vaughan. Bishop Bond's interest in the belief is attested to by a couple of incidents. He presided over two British-Israel lectures given by William H. Poole in Montreal. Furthermore, he delivered a sermon commending the strength of the British-Israel interpretation before the St. George's Society. See W. H. Poole, LL.D., *Anglo-Israel*, 299-303.

> and the belief that in the British nation are to be found the descendants of Israel of old is perhaps more widely spread than we are at first disposed to imagine. We have noticed of late in more than one instance that this belief has fastened itself on the minds of men, while they themselves are almost unconscious of it; and we could not have a clearer sign than this, that the subject of Anglo-Israelism, as it is popularly called, has secured for itself a secure foothold amongst the many and varying topics of religious thought and inquiry which engage the attention of the thinking men of the day.[148]

Even among the dissenting clergy, some of the most popular preachers were avowed British-Israelites. The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse made a public declaration of his belief in *The Methodist Times*; the Rev. Joseph T. Wild, who was voted the 'most popular preacher in Toronto' by the readers of the *Daily Mail* in 1891, often attracted more than 3,000 people to hear his Identity sermons; and the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, D.D., minister of the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, and who later served as a patron of the Federation, all were respected by their congregations and the public at large and all took active part in the movement.[149] Moreover, the popular religious writer and founder of the Pentecostal League, Reader Harris, K.C., the respected Bible scholar Dr. Alexander James Harrison, and Farrar Fenton, M.R.A.S., M.C.A.A., who, apart from his close association with Cecil Rhodes and his instrumental role in the founding of the DeBeer's diamond company, was a scriptural authority of some note, found the Identity to warrant

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[148]"Anglo-Israelism," *The Church of England Pulpit and Ecclesiastical Review* (15 February 1890).

[149]Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, "Some Notes on My Australian Tour," *The Methodist Times* 5 November 1891; "Long Ministry is Ended: Dr. Joseph Wild Is Dead," *The Evening Telegram* (Toronto), 19 August, 1908; "Dinsdale T. Young--A British-Israelite?," *Christian World* (London), 15 November 1917. See also, *Who Was Who*, vol. 3 s.v. "Pearse, Rev. Mark Guy", and s.v. "Young, Rev. Dinsdale Thomas"; also, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12, s.v. "Wild, Joseph".

their belief.[150] Though always a minority opinion, the theory was not limited to backwater vicars or "self-styled clergy" but attracted the attention and even the respect of not a few religious leaders in Britain and the Colonies.[151]

Two leading figures in the cultural life of nineteenth-century Britain also displayed some interest and conviction in British-Israel. Martin Farquar Tupper, who was once expected to inherit Wordswoth's mantle of Poet Laureate, had instead, by the end of his career, unfortunately become the most disparaged, if most widely known, poet of the Victorian age. Nevertheless, his magnus opus, *Proverbial Philosophy* (1842), had sold one and a half million copies by the late 1880s. Tupper's *Jubilate: A Jubilee Offering*, written for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, was not only his final composition but betrayed a clear knowledge of the British-Israel theory. In a prefatory note, Tupper explained that under the fifty years of Queen Victoria's reign the world had made its most remarkable advances. "Victoria is personally (more than any other monarch before her) a blessing to the universe of men," he deigned, "and every one of her three hundred million subjects has reason to thank God for the gift of such a Queen . . . one so blest of Heaven and Earth as the present ruler of Britain and her dependencies,--the true Anglo-Israel of God." In the ode itself are found the following lines:

Jubilate! shout the song,
Thrilling, joyous, loud and long,--

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[150]Reader Harris, K.C., *The Lost Tribes of Israel*; see also *Who Was Who*, vol. 1, s.v. "Harris, Reader, K.C.", and vol. 2, s.v. "Fenton, Ferrar". The transcript of a letter from Dr. Alexander J. Harrison to the churchwarden R. C. Jackson, in which his conversion to British-Israel thought is detailed is found in *Banner of Israel* 33 (3 February 1909), 61. See also Fenton's *Odes* 37 & 38.

[151]Spiritus Sanctus, *The Twelve Tribes Identified and England's Success Fully Accounted For*, iv.

Jubilate! fling the sound
All the startled nations round,
*Israel lost, and Israel found!*

Yea: for Mother England stands
Girt with children in all lands,
*And her ten fold Tribes are seen*
Bringing homage to their Queen.[152]

Though it is possible that Tupper was speaking figuratively, that the imagery used was so obviously British-Israelitish indicates his acute awareness if not conviction of the theory.[153] "Of all the jubilee tributes," it has been said, Tupper's composition "was perhaps the most truly Victorian in its loyalty and piety."[154] Though perhaps lacking as an artist, Tupper's embrace of British-Israel ideas is most important in this representative sense. Tupper, his critic Ralph Buchmen explains, "is interesting only as a representative of the Victorian middle class mind. His ideas and ideals were those of a great part of the Mid-Victorian reading public between 1840 and 1880." Reflected in *Jubilate* are certain Vic-

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[152]Martin F. Tupper, *Jubilate: A Jubuliee Offering* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1887), 6-7, 12-13 (my emphasis). Perhaps also of some note is the fact that much earlier Tupper had contributed a laudatory poem, "The Anglo-Saxon Race", to a mid-century journal, *The Anglo-Saxon*. In the opening stanza Tupper writes: "Stretch forth! stretch forth! from the south to the north,/ From the east to the west,-- stretch forth! stretch forth!/ Strengthen thy stakes and lengthen thy cords,--/ The world is a tent for the world's true lords!/ Break forth and spread over every place/ The world is a world for the Saxon race." These lines are taken almost directly from Isaiah 54:2-3 in which they describe the future spread and dominance of Israel. *Anglo-Saxon* II, A, (1850): 466, cited in MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History*, 97.

[153]Tupper's invocation of Identity language, according to a Liverpool paper, "is no poetical fancy," but rather attested to his conviction as to the truth of the theory. See *Liverpool Courier*, 11 March 1887.

[154]Derek Hudson, *Martin Tupper: His Rise and Fall* (London: Constable, 1949), 320.

torian concepts which Tupper clearly embodied, among them a strong faith in British racial superiority. "The feeling of religious and racial superiority [to which Tupper appealed]," Ralph Buchman notes, "is perhaps a result of considering patriotism as a religion. English protestantism was the foundation on which the Englishman's racial self-conscious was built. Thus the Victorian's chauvinism is a curious mixture of racial and religious ideas of superiority."[155] This helps explain the attraction which British-Israelism held for the Victorian mind. It was the ultimate manifestation of the racial self-consciousness which Tupper best represented. The theory found itself situated within an intellectual climate which emphasized racial identity as the basis for racial predominance.

William Holman Hunt, F.R.A., acknowledged as one of the leaders of the Pre-Raphaelite school of painters, also showed interest in the movement, having read many British-Israel writings. While researching his famous painting "The Light of the World," depicting Jesus Christ amongst the Jews, Hunt came to the conclusion that the Hebrews of ancient times were of fair complexion much like the people of Britain. Hunt had not only read extensively the accounts of travelers in and historians of the region, but he had himself gone to Palestine. Arriving in Jerusalem, "I looked with great attention at all the Jews I found there, and although there were a certain proportion who were readily recognisable to an Englishman as Jews, there were some, the greater number, who were fair, and who might have passed without be so recognised." In 1900 Hunt addressed a meeting of Identity adherents in Exeter Hall and explained his conclusions as to the physical affinity between the ancient Hebrews and the English people. Hunt had been persuaded

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[155]Ralph Buchman, *Martin F. Tupper and the Victorian Middle Class Mind* (Bern: A Franke, 1941), 6, 149-50.

of at least the probable truth of the theory based upon his own research, which was undertaken for entirely different ends and completed before he knew that the theory even existed.[156] By the early decades of the twentieth century, the British people had become familiar with the idea of their Israelitish descent. So well-known was the Identity that the theory enjoyed the honor (or perhaps the indignity) of serving as the central premise of the popular and prolific novelist James Owen Hannay's facetious and highly sardonic book, *The Lost Tribes.*[157] Hannay was by no means enamored with the belief, and yet he recognized the power and persuasiveness of the concept as well as the credulity of its adherents.

Far and away the most revered of the movement's adherents were those found among the Royal family. Queen Victoria, the Marchioness of Waterford, Queen Mary and her mother, the Duchess of Teck, as well as Princess Alice found much of the Identity interesting and convincing. Victoria had spoken many times of the theory, especially of Edward Hine's works, to her court artist Edward Corbould and every year the Master of the Queen's Household and a devout British-Israelite, Major General Sir John Cowell, presented her with a bound volume of the Banner of Israel.[158] When the future Edward

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[156]William Holman Hunt, "Ancient Jewish Features, Not Those Now Called 'The Jewish Type': Address at Exeter Hall, 2 May, 1900," in, Rev. Robert Douglas, M.A., *God and Greater Britain: The British Race from the Twentieth Century B.C. to the Twentieth Century A.D.* (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1900), 183-87.

[157]George A. Birmingham, *The Lost Tribes* (London: J. Murray, 1914).

[158]Edward Hine, Buffalo, NY, to Isaac Loveland London, March 31, 1887, in Ben-Israel, ed., *Memoirs and a Selection of Letters From the Correspondence of Edward Hine* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1909), 44; "Obituary--Major General Sir John Cowell," *Banner of Israel* 43 (26 September 1894): 477.

VIII was born in 1894, Victoria insisted that he take on the name David, and she called him David until the day she died. This was, it was widely reported, because she was "firmly convinced in her own mind that her family had descended from the Psalmist, and was the tribe, of all others, of Israel."[159] In 1899 Victoria sent to Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany a copy of the Royal Family tree, "preserved as a very sacred object by the Queen." At the root was engraved the name of King David and this, it seemed, formed the basis of the Queen's confidence in the Identity as well as "much of the Kaiser's conviction regarding the divine origin of his authority."[160] It was publicly acknowledged that Queen Mary, wife of George V, grew up in a household saturated with British-Israel beliefs. As far as her convictions in adulthood were concerned, the press concluded that,

> whether or not any members of the Royal Family are deeply interested in this subject--when so many thrones have been shaken 'Well may they believe in these prophecies and rest their hope in the word of God'--it is admitted that the Duchess of Teck was a keen Anglo-Israelite. Whether Queen Mary has or has not discarded the belief in the Israelitish origin of the British people, she was bred up in that somewhat inspiring faith. Early impressions are seldom eradicated, and it is probable that the Queen will to her dying day be more or less under the influence of the faith which she learned at her mother's knee.[161]

Queen Victoria's grand-daughter, the Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, was the most cherished Patron of the British-Israel World Federation, the culmination of the move to

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[159]"The Duke of Cornwall," *The Woman at Home* (July 1910); see also, "Edward From David," *The New York Press*, 26 January 1905; "An English King David," *The Western Evening Herald* (Plymouth), 13 April 1907; "Vanities," *Vanity Fair*, 19 July 1894; *Daily Chronicle* (London), 11 November 1917.

[160]*St. James Gazzette* (London), 6 September 1899; also "Descended From David: That is the Claim of Queen Victoria and There Seems to Be Some Basis For It," *Detroit News Tribune*, 24 September 1899; *Weekly Scotsman*, 19 November 1904.

[161]*Review of Reviews*, (August 1910): 132.

organize. She not only appeared at the inaugural meeting of the Federation but also attended, with her husband, the opening sessions of its First Annual Congress, held in July, 1920.[162] There were other indications and suggestions of interest in the Identity from the Royals, though from what it shown here it is evident not only that the certain members of the Royal family held to elements of the theory but that, in an age when Royal foibles were generally overlooked by the press, the mainstream media had enough regard for the movement to publicize the connections between the Identity and the Royals.[163]

The opponents and critics of British-Israelism have been referred to in this work on a number of occasions. A word or two should, perhaps, be said about them. Opposition to British-Israel came in many forms. Neither the critics themselves, nor their attacks, were homogenous. While no strict body of opposition developed, words critical of the theory did come from the pens of prominent people such as Gladstone, William Butler Yeats, and Goldwin Smith, the organs of learned societies such as the London Anthropological Society and the British Association, from religious leaders, scholars, newspaper and journal editors, and local vicars.[164] If, as is said, the influence of an idea can be

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[162]*Times* (London), 4 July 1919; *British-Israel Congress,* 8; see also *New York Times*, 21 August 1920.

[163]Rev. W. M. H. Milner, whose father was the personal chaplain to Duke of Saxe-Coburg, was granted access to the private royal libraries to complete his research on the Davidic descent of the Royal Family, which was then presented to the King and Queen. Edward VII was publicly said to have read much of the literature and Princess Louise had several sets of Edward Hine's works.

[164]For Gladstone's response to the theory see Bouchier Wrey Savile, *Are We Israelites?*, 14. Also found gummed into the back of Eward Hine's personal "chromatic" copy of the Bible, in which he underlined all the prophecies to Israel and Judah in different colors, are to be found two newspaper cuttings. Both are extracts of letters from Gladstone to authors of anti-Identity tracts. In them Gladstone pronounced the theory to be

judged by the caliber of its critics, then the power of British-Israel deserves some acknowledgment. Critics attacked both the fundamental motivations of the movement as well as the particulars of its teachings. Just as British-Israelism worked from sentiments of racial and imperial pride and depended on a strictly literal rendering of the Bible, opposition to the movement came from those who found any or all of these elements distasteful or dangerous. Articles, sermons, and tracts appeared on occasion which sought to point out the errors of the theory. A number of opponents explained that though they had at first found the theory misguided yet harmless, as it received greater attention they felt it necessary to refute it.[165] Only rarely did opposition lead to formal legal or ecclesiastical measures against the belief or its adherents. In 1882 the Right Rev. James Francis Turner, the Anglican Bishop of Grafton and Armidale, New South Wales, was forced to take action against one of the clergy in his diocese. This, however, was a measured response to the overzealous dedication which his subordinate held for the theory. The Rev. J. Gough was an avid British-Israelite, so much so that he refused to perform the rite of Confirmation unless the Bishop accepted the theory and allowed it to be taught during the ceremony. The Bishop refused. Gough responded by ceasing to perform his duties

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"an error" and the arguments against it to be "rational, historical, and orthodox." Ben-Israel, *Memoirs . . . of Edward Hine*, 60. Yeats co-authored a letter to the *Times* expressing his dismay at the excavations for the Ark of the Covenant taking place in 1902 at Tara Hill in Ireland which he believed were being carried out by, "the sect that believes the English to be descended from the Ten Tribes." "The Hill of Tara" *Times* (London), 27 June 1902.

[165]Wilson, *Anglo-Israelism Not Necessary*, iii; Rev. R. Cornall, *The British Nation NOT Identical with the Lost Ten Tribes*, 3; J. C. McClellan, *Anglo-Israelism: Its Pernicious Nature Fully Exposed* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1876), 3.

whereupon the Bishop suggested that he resign his cure; Gough accepted and announced that from that point on he would leave the Church and preach his own doctrines independently. This incident, however, was hardly reflective of the general relationship between the adherents and their critics. Even the editor of the *Banner of Israel*, while admiring the "earnestness of [Gough's] belief in our origin, and strength of his convictions," also decided that Gough had "outrun the dictates of Christian discretion and prudence" and "erred from over-zeal." "The Bishop," in this case, had "entirely the best of the argument."[166] For the most part, despite the concerns of a number of critics that the theory was heretical and pernicious, the debate persisted only in the arena of ideas. Both sides regarded the other as ignorant and misguided, but both were also intent on persuading, rather than crushing or silencing, their opponents.

**Conclusion**

British-Israel, then, occupied a much more central position in the intellectual climate of its time than one might expect. The theory not only reflected much concurrent imperial thought (as seen in chapter one), it could, by the 1890s, lay claim to a respected place within it. It was not simply a fanatical set of ideas which co-opted or capitalized on the imperial feelings of late nineteenth-century Britain but a earnest attempt to explain Britain's dominance in terms intelligible to its audience. Its emphasis on racial origins and imperial mission qualified British-Israelism as a legitimate interpretation of current events. The long history of associating Britain with Israel, both symbolically and eth-

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[166]Rev. Turner, D.D., *A Letter to the Members of the Church of England in the Diocese of Grafton and Armidale, In Reference to the Subject of Certain False Teaching Which has Been Addressed to Them by One Lately of Their Clergy* (Sydney: Gibbs, Shallard & Co., 1883); *Banner of Israel* 6 (November 8 1882): 471.

nologically, moreover, could not help but strengthen its contention. Its most fundamental tenets, though certainly unorthodox, could claim a good deal of historical, scientific, and scriptural corroboration. Even its most unique features, such as the beliefs concerning the Coronation Stone or its peculiar philo-Semitism, were not without historical or contemporary (though somewhat inexact) parallels. The theory promised neither spiritual salvation, sectarian advantage, nor political advancement; all it could offer was a glorious racial identity for the British people. This seemed to be sufficient, however, for both its survival and steady growth even in the face of derision and disdain. "The formation in Wellington of a 'British-Israel Association'," an antipodean editorial explained, "is an important proof of the vitality of a theory that has been, during the last twenty or thirty years, subjected to every kind of criticism. Intermittent attacks of ridicule have not killed it, and it has survived the neglect of the masses and the scorn of the learned." All this, the writer continued, was heaped upon "what is probably the greatest religious question of the age."[167] The Wellington British-Israel Association and the scores of other Identity organizations throughout Britain and the empire attested to the theory's appeal. Its ability to inspire intelligent people from numerous religions, many educational backgrounds, all classes, and both genders forces the historian to look outside the realms of religious antipathy, class consciousness, or gender identity to discover the motive force behind its allure. Instead it issued from the theory's ability to procure for the British an imperial-racial identity. It was an identity, which like the one emanating from most imperial thought, emphasized the origins and destiny of the race. The function and place of the

[167]"Editorial," *New Zealand Times* (Wellington), 8 July 1899.

British-Israel identity were secured because of its similarity to, rather than any divergence from, a significant portion of contemporary thought.

A striking feature of the theory, as intimated above, is that its success depended less on evangelical enthusiasm than on an appeal to the strength of the logic behind its conclusions. Outside observers repeatedly recognized the "sound reasoning" of British-Israel ideas. Reviewing a lecture given by Rev. J. I. Jones, the reporter for the *Yarmouth Times* admitted that,

> we must say his arguments are logical and convincing, so much so in fact that the most confirmed doubter, after listening to him a while, will have his faith shaken and will be convinced in spite of himself that there must be something in the statement that the Anglo-Saxons are the direct descendants of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel.[168]

Philo-Israel's second edition of *The Geography of the Gates* was a "work of singular freshness and power and persuasiveness," a contemporary journal noted. Its argument, presented in "the most scholarly, comprehensive and impressive manner," was "robust, detailed, cumulative, and striking."[169] The Identity's place within the intellectual climate of its age found its surest footing on its appeal to the Victorian's intellect, albeit an intellect colored by certain assumptions concerning the Anglo-Saxon and his empire. While not discounting the role which feelings of pride and self-adulation must have played in the theory's appeal, British-Israel was not simply an irrational response to either a sense of fear or of arrogance. The creation of organized societies to propagate what was considered to be the truth of British-Israelism (a subject which will be detailed in chapter

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[168]"An Interesting Lecture," *Yarmouth Times*, 14 June 1901.

[169]Review of *The Geography of the Gates*, 2nd. ed., by Philo-Israel, in *The Gentleman's Journal*, eds. Rev. George Duncan, D.D. and H.I.H. Eugenie di Christoforo (September 1892).

three) betrays an acute level-headedness on the part of its adherents and sympathizers. Though motivated by a faith in their convictions, the associations were notably secular in their workings and organization. The movement had less an air of a feverish ebullience than of a rational and almost pedantic process mimicking many of the most mainstream contemporary imperial, scientific, and religious opinions.

## CHAPTER THREE

## THE GENESIS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE MOVEMENT

Around 1870 the belief in the identity of the British people with the lost tribes began to coalesce into an organized movement. Though some sort of formal organization had been urged as early as 1867 by the physician Dr. William Holt Yates, who believed that "we men of Ephraim ought to band together to give our views to the Church," momentum for such a move did not accumulate until late 1872.[1] One of the earliest formal gatherings to discuss the Identity was held at the Conference Hall in Mildmay Park, London, in June, 1872. The Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, Rev. Samuel Gobat, D.D., presided over a conference attended by several hundred people. The meeting's purpose, the Bishop remarked, was "to invite Christians to the reverent and prayerful consideration of the probable ISRAELITISH ORIGIN of [the British] nation, which involves a deeply interesting consideration as to the origin of the whole TEUTONIC RACE, which providential circumstances had so conspicuously brought forward to the front of civilization, religion, and power, in these eventful times."[2] The conference met with

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[1]Quoted by Rev. Hibbert Newton, ed., *Israel, or, The Ten Tribes, Identified with the Anglo-Saxon and Other Branches of the Teutonic Race. Being a Report of a Meeting of the Anglo-Ephraim Association, Held in St. Jude's Lecture Hall, Mildmay Park, Wednesday, 24th June, 1874. Rev. F.R.A. Glover in the Chair* (London: W.H. Guest, 1874), vi-vii.

[2]*The Conference on Israel: Four Papers Read at the Conference, Mildmay Park Wednesday and Thursday, 26th and 27th June, 1872, On the Probable Israelitish Origin of the English Nation. The Right Rev. the Anglican Bishop from Jerusalem in the Chair* ed. Henry Innes (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1872), 7-8.

considerable success, the papers being written or presented by men of high social standing, including three Anglican vicars, two physicians, and the Astronomer Royal for Scotland, Charles Piazzi Smyth. Out of this meeting came the founding, later that year, of the Anglo-Ephraim Association, the first organization designed to investigate and propagate the Identity.

The Anglo-Ephraim Association did not survive long, only about four years. The Anglo-Israel Association, founded in 1874, had an even shorter life span. Their inception, however, served as milestones in the growth of an idea which many considered to be neither "new nor a mere growth of this generation."[3] The opening words of the *Standard of Israel,* the journal of the Anglo-Israel Association, attest to the feelings of most early British-Israelites that their beliefs were not novel even if their organizations were. "The Hebrew Origin of the Anglo-Saxon Race," the journal begins, "is no mere modern speculation, or hastily-taken-up theory, founded on insufficient premises, or drawn from inconclusive reasoning. Our Hebrew original has been the firm and consistent belief of numerous earnest and enlightened Christians, possessing all the advantages of education and learning, for many years past. As an indistinct feeling and unproved theory, it dates to a considerably farther period back."[4] As has been shown in chapter two, this close association of the British people with the Israelites does date back

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[3]Henry Innes, "Introduction," *The Conference on Israel*, 3; W. T. Green of London and "a number of friends" formed another short-lived organization, Israel's Identification Association, in the Spring of 1874. See "Correspondence," *Life From the Dead* 1 (May 1874): 255.

[4]Rev. A. B. Grimaldi, M.A., ed., "Introduction," *The Standard of Israel: The Journal of the Anglo-Israel Association* 1 (July 1875): 1.

to a very early period. The existence of organized groups to disseminate the idea of a biological link between the two peoples, however, has a much shorter history. It is the purpose of this chapter to outline the growth in the belief and the move to organize. It was, in the end, the organizations which really defined the movement. Though the majority of adherents never bothered to join an official association, by the 1880s the means of promulgating the belief, whether lectures, books, or journals, were largely controlled by either the central or a local British-Israel group. Over the next decades such control became increasingly centralized in London. In the years after the founding of the British-Israel World Federation in 1919 almost all Identity activities throughout the country were directed from its Headquarters at 6 Buckingham Gate, across the road from the Palace. The organizational history of the British-Israel theory was not one of unmitigated progress. In fact, it was beset by problems. It does, however, form the framework of the theory's rise and development and for this reason it deserves a detailed examination.

**Richard Brothers, The Nephew of the Almighty**

The place of Richard Brothers (1757-1824) in the growth of the British-Israel theory is a controversial one. A Canadian-born Royal Navy officer, Brothers began to preach in the 1790s that the chosen people of God, whom he termed 'the Hebrews', were be found in the British Isles.[5] Though for this reason Brothers has often been touted,

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[5]For more on Richard Brothers see: *Dictionary of National Biography* s.v. "Brothers, Richard"; Cecil Roth, *Nephew of the Almighty* (1933); Ronald Matthews, "Richard Brothers, 'God Almighty's Nephew' 1757-1824," chap. in *English Messiahs: Studies of Six English Religious Pretenders, 1656-1927* (London, 1936; reprint, New York: Benjamin Blom Publishing, 1971), 87-125 (page references are to reprint edition);

especially by critics, as the founder of the British-Israel theory, his place in the movement is not quite that certain. Brothers' ideas regarding the descent of the British from the Israelites and its consequences were highly divergent from the later Identity theory. Few British-Israelites were aware of his existence, and his writings were never recommended by any later organization. His inclusion here, therefore, requires some explanation. Many commentators on the nineteenth-century British-Israel movement, both contemporary and more recent, trace it back to Brothers.[6] Though in reality this connection is weak, the perception of such a link requires at least an acknowledgment of his existence and teachings. His place in this chapter, rather than in chapter two where early ideas on Britain as Israel are detailed, comes from the fact that Brothers' teachings led to the very first *movement* based upon the idea of the Israelites in Britain. Although his movement never reached any level of organization above that of prophet/disciples, his ideas did inspire people to associate with others of like mind towards an anticipated goal. Such inspiration was strong enough that though none of Brothers' predictions or teachings were ever fulfilled, it was still possible to find one of his last devotees actively preaching them over twenty years after the prophet's death. Brothers' place in the idea's development, then, deserves at least a brief exploration.

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Cecil Roth, ed. *Encyclopædia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1971), s.v. "Richard Brothers," by Cecil Roth; Harrison, *The Second Coming*, 57-85.

[6]*Sunday Companion* (London), 27 August 1898; *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1901 ed., s.v. "Anglo-Israelism"; *Liverpool Express*, 20 May 1903; *Dictionary of National Biography* s.v. "Brothers, Richard"; J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America. Revised and Updated Edition* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), 68; Bamber Gascoigne, *Encyclopedia of Britain* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1993), s.v. "British Israelites".

Brothers' early life was fairly uneventful. He began his career in the navy at the age of fourteen and served honorably until his discharge to half-pay in 1783. Sometime in the decade of the 1780s, Brothers became convinced that he was the new messiah. His surname and his birthday (Christmas day), he believed, were important clues to his relationship to Jesus Christ, and upon further reflection he came to the conclusion that he was a direct descendant of one of Jesus' brothers. This made him, therefore, the 'Nephew of the Almighty', which he took as one of his many titles, including 'Prince of the Hebrews' and 'Slain Lamb of Revelations'. Brothers began to make apocalyptic predictions about himself and his country in 1792. His ideas soon attracted many hundreds of followers and after the printing of his most important work, *A Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times* (1794), his following grew into the thousands.[7] In his work Brothers explained that at the dispersion of the 'Hebrews' (he is almost always unclear about whether he means the Jews, the ten tribes, or both) many of them came to the British Isles. He had been sent by God, in these latter days, to lead these British-Hebrews gloriously back to Jerusalem. According to his teachings, on November 19, 1795 Brothers would be revealed to the entire nation as the Prince of the Hebrews and the ruler of the world. At that time, King George must deliver up his crown to him and

[7]Richard Brothers, *A Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and the Times* (London: G. Riebau, 1794).

declare his allegiance. By 1798 the rebuilding of Jerusalem along lines dictated to Brothers by God was to begin.[8]

His book inspired a spate of pamphlets both in support and condemnation of his views. His following and influence continued to grow during the next several months. Brothers' repeated references to the overthrow of the British crown, especially in light of the Revolutionary events going on in France, convinced the Crown that Brothers and his movement posed a legitimate threat to the security of the nation.[9] He was arrested for treason on March 4th, 1795 and, after numerous interviews, was sent to an asylum for the criminally insane at Islington.[10] His disciples were outraged and they overwhelmed the press with testimonials of his innocence and pleas for his release. On the floor of the House of Commons, Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, M.P., gave Brothers a rousing defense. Halhed's dedication to Brothers was further shown by a small pamphlet which he wrote in support of the prophet's teachings.[11] On March 31 he moved that the principles of *A Revealed Knowledge* be laid before the House so that all could read the prophecies and come to the conclusion, as he had, that Brothers posed no threat to the nation. No one,

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[8]Brothers published these Divinely-inspired civic plans in detail in *A Description of Jerusalem, by Mr. Brothers, Who Will Be Revealed to the Hebrews as their King and Restorer* (London: George Riebau, 1801).

[9]For a discussion of Brothers' impact in the context of the French Revolution see Clarke Garrett, *Respectable Folly: Millenarians and the Frech Revoltuion in France and England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 177-220.

[10]*Times* (London), 5 March 1795; 6 March 1975; 9 March 1795.

[11]Thomas Brassey Halhed, M.P., *Testimony of the Authenticity of the Prophecies of Richard Brothers and of His Mission to Recall the Jews* (London: R. Faulder, 1795).

however, seconded the motion and there it died.[12] Furthermore, the pleas for his release went unheeded, and for the next eleven years Brothers smuggled-out pamphlets from his cell in the asylum. Despite his imprisonment he remained undaunted. Continuing to make prophecies from his cell, Brothers predicted that his identity would soon be revealed to the world even long after 1795 and 1798 had come and gone.[13] In 1802, Brothers wrote to the proprietor of the asylum, Dr. Samuel F. Simmons, begging his release and threatening dire consequences if his plea went unheeded. "The time is approaching (it may be a distant plurality of weeks, but barely of months I think) when all the power will be palsied almost to death," he begins,

> it would cease entirely if I did not prevent it, so great will be the terror and distress of all men. When God begins to convulse the globe and overthrow its cities--it is I--and I only, that is to support the throne, or it falls--it is I that must keep the government together, and all public authority, or all would fall to pieces like brick and mortar--or vanish like dust. Both king and government will look to me for counsel, and implore my assistance for safety.[14]

His cries from his cell, however, had little influence and the enthusiasm which his predictions had inspired during the first half of the 1790s waned markedly. After his release from prison in 1806, his following had almost vanished and he died a relatively poor man with few friends and little influence. His cause was taken up after his death by

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[12]*Times* (London), 1 April 1795.

[13]Brothers, *A Letter to His Majesty, and One to Her Majesty, by Mr. Brothers, who Will Be Revealed to the Hebrews as their King. Also, a Poem, with a Dissertation on the Fall of Eve. And an Address, to the Five Eminent Counsellors* (London: George Riebau, 1802).

[14]Brothers, *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Brothers, who Will Be Revealed to the Hebrews, as their King and Restorer, to Dr. Samuel Foort Simmons, MD.* (London: A. Searle, 1802), 3.

his friend and disciple, John Finlayson (1770-1854) who preached Brothers' ideas at the doors of the Great Exhibition of 1851, but the movement had for all intents and purposes ended with the failure of its prophet's predictions.

Though the Richard Brothers phenomenon was the earliest formation of a popular movement based upon the idea of the literal Israel being found in the British Isles, its connection to the British-Israel theory is indirect at best. On the few occasions when Brothers is noticed by later Identity writers he is only afforded the position of one who had stumbled upon elements of the truth without fully understanding them. "He got hold of the true facts of our origin," readers of the *Banner* were told, " but being a person of weak intellect, he ended his days in a mad-house."[15] Brothers' link with the later movement has been most strongly pressed by British-Israelism's critics. By crediting the origin of the movement to Brothers, some adherents suggested, critics hoped that his history of mental illness would "place an indelible stain on British-Israelism."[16] The distance between Brothers and the British-Israel theory, however, was not simply the product of later adherents wishing to distance themselves from a madman. The nature, content, and goals of Brothers' teaching were significantly different from the modern movement. Much of his thought is convoluted, his writings are filled with emotional appeals, dire warnings, and apocalyptic descriptions. There is no evidence of the calm and earnest deliberations found in later British-Israel thought. Moreover, it was not until

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[15]*Banner of Israel* 23 (5 April 1899): 148.

[16]"Who Originated the Identity," *Banner of Israel* 28 (8 July 1903): 240.

1822 that he was able give any historical explanation for the existence of 'Hebrews' among the British people--a critical part of the later theory.[17] Brothers belongs more within the millenarian tradition of the late eighteenth century than in the imperial and racial mind-set of a century later.[18] He cannot, with any accuracy, be considered the founder of the British-Israel theory; that mantle belongs rightfully to John Wilson of Cheltenham, a man of entirely different circumstances and character. Nevertheless, Brothers makes evident that the concept of Britain's Israelitish origin could exert itself upon the minds of people and encourage them to organize themselves for its further propagation.

**John Wilson and the Foundations of the Modern Movement**

Almost without exception British-Israelites have credited the founding of their ideas to John Wilson (1799?-1870), the "father of the rediscovery of Israel."[19] Unlike Brothers, Wilson had no messianic aspirations. He preached neither salvation nor damnation. He made no specific apocalyptic predictions--though he, like many others, did interpret current world events in the light of prophecy. He was by no means a madman. Adherents deeply admired him and opponents always regarded him with

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[17]Brothers, *A Correct Account of the Invasion and Conquest of this Island by the Saxons, &c., Necessary to be Known by the English Nation, the Descendants of the Greater Part of the Ten Tribes* (London, 1822).

[18]Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, 4; Mayir Vereté, "The Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought, 1790-1840," *Middle Eastern Studies* (January 1872): 8-9.

[19]Rev. Alexander Beaufort Grimaldi, M.A., *Ephraim in England-Israel in Europe* (Bath: Charles Hallet, the Bladud Libraries, 1889), 1.

"sincere respect."[20] Wilson was, in fact, a recognized Bible scholar. He worked closely for several years with Robert Mimpriss in the development of Mimpriss' *System of Graduated Simultaneous Instruction,* widely used at the time to train Sunday-school teachers.[21] Upon his death in January 1870, a Brighton paper recorded his life with the following words:

> A man has just now passed from among us, whose going out ought not, we think, to occur unnoticed by this community, of which for nearly twenty years he had been a member. Professedly a phrenologist (dating from a time when phrenology was in vogue), he was besides a scholar, a writer, a teacher, and a preacher. We feel safe from contradiction in saying that he was the greatest Hebraist of his time; indeed, this can scarcely be doubted, since he was deemed competent to teach Hebrew to the professors of our best colleges. Nor, perhaps, was there his equal in Biblical criticism and research.[22]

Wilson's background in Biblical scholarship and phrenology made him particularly interested in the racial aspects of the Bible and the foundation of the modern races.[23] His extensive knowledge of Hebrew helped in his inquiries upon the ultimate destiny of one of the missing races of Biblical chronology, the lost tribes of Israel. Unlike Brothers'

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[20]Wilkinson, *Englishmen not Israelites*, 5; Savile, *Letter to a Friend, the Reverend John Rowlands,* 5-6.

[21]For more on Robert Mimpriss see *Dictionary of National Biography* s.v. " Mimpriss, Robert".

[22]Quoted by Polwhele, *The English the Descendants of 'The Ten Tribes'*, 21-22.

[23]For Wilson's ideas on the use of phrenology in the investigation of Biblical matters see his work *Our Israelitish Origin,* 3rd American ed., 33-37, 230-31. For more on Wilson's phrenological ideas see Wilson, *Phrenology Consistent With Reason and Revelation* (Cheltenham: Mimpriss, 1843). See also Roger Cooter, *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science: Phrenology and the Organization of Consent in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 300, and Cooter, *Phrenology in the British Isles: An Annotated, Historical Biobibliography and Index* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1989), 348.

enthusiastic, emotional, and apocalyptic ranting, Wilson's investigation of the lost tribes was far more rational and methodical, using all the contemporary intellectual tools at his disposal: phrenology, linguistics, history, and Biblical criticism.

Wilson had come to the conclusion that the Anglo-Saxons were the descendants of Israel in 1837. According to a biographical note in the posthumous fifth edition of his most important book, *Our Israelitish Origin,* he came upon this knowledge while trying to formulate a new interpretation of history using his phrenological training.[24] Certain striking similarities which he noticed between the English people and the Israelite tribe of Ephraim, especially in modes of warfare, encouraged him to investigate further. It was during the course of this investigation that he became convinced that the Anglo-Saxons were of the tribe of Ephraim. He gave his first course of lectures on the subject during the winter of 1837-38 in Dublin. That next summer the Rev. H. Nixon of Boostertown, offered the use of his Infant School for a second course of lectures. By 1839 Wilson was lecturing to large audiences in the North of Ireland and in Liverpool. The lectures were successful, and Wilson looked back on them with a sense of great pride. "Several of the most eminent clerical students of prophecy attended [the Liverpool lectures]," he recalled. "One of them had previously expressed his dissent from the view; and said that, after having examined my evidence, he would speak out if he found me in the wrong. He did not do so; and I suppose that the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, is not a man who would fail to

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[24]John Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin: Lectures on Ancient Israel and The Israelitish Origin of the Nations of Modern Europe* 5th ed. (London: W.H. Guest, 1876).

fulfil his word."[25] The lectures culminated in 1840 with their publication as *Our Israelitish Origin,* a closely-argued volume of over three hundred pages which served as a textbook of the basic principles of British-Israel belief for the next thirty years.

Wilson's interpretation of the Israelitish origin of the British, however, was to evolve significantly in later years. His lectures represent a transition between the idea of 'Protestant Israel' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and that of 'British-Israel' of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth. The idea of Protestant Israel proposed that the Protestant nations of northern Europe had *usurped* the place of the ancient Israelites and were now, under the new covenant of Christ, in receipt of the blessings given to Abraham and his descendants. They were not the racial descendants of the Hebrews but simply God's new favorites. British-Israel argued that the blessings were to devolve *only upon Britain.* This was not because Britain had simply replaced Israel, but because the British *alone* were the actual descendants of the Israelites. Britain's Christianity was an important factor, but only in that it signified a repentance upon the part of Israel and an acceptance of God's word. By accepting Christianity, the lost tribes had reconciled themselves with God and were now in a position to receive the promises. Unlike Protestant Israel, Christianity had not made the British the chosen people, it simply returned the Israelites to God's favor. Wilson's ideas lie somewhere in between. In line with the ideas of Protestant Israel, he agreed with "those who apply, to these Christian nations, many of the prophecies respecting Israel." For Wilson, then, most European

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[25]Wilson, "Preface to the Third London Edition," in *Our Israelitish Origin,* 3rd American ed., vii.

peoples were part of Israel. However, he makes it clear that the prophecies are being fulfilled in the Protestant nations of Europe because "these nations have not merely come into the place of ancient Israel, but are truly the seed of Abraham according to the flesh--are of the so-called 'lost-house' of Israel,--the leading tribe of which was Ephraim."[26] Wilson's lectures became the basis of what would be later called the 'Teutonic' school of British-Israel thought. While emphasizing the importance of Ephraim (the Anglo-Saxons), this school insisted that the rest of the ten tribes were to be found in the northern Protestant nations of Europe. The Teutonic theory remained dominant in British-Israel circles until the mid-1870's when the more limited view of Britain alone as Israel took hold. In later years the struggle between these two interpretations became the cause of bitter acrimony in the midst of the British-Israel cause.

After an initial flurry of interest, the spread of Wilson's message was extremely slow.[27] While the subject attracted attention it failed to energize people to action. Wilson himself was not interested so much in creating an organized movement as in spreading an idea. Moreover, he never had the means to devote his entire time to the issue.

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[26]Wilson, "Preface to the First Edition," in ibid., vi.

[27]The book reached its third edition in just four years (1844). The first edition evoked a public response by one of the most important prophetic scholars of the day, the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, in his *The Restoration of the Jews to Their Own Land,* lxvi-lxvii. Wilson set the precedent for later British-Israel authors by responding to Bickersteth's objections in the third edition, quickly, logically, and civilly. The editors of the American edition (1851) remarked that they had "read nothing, of human production, with so much interest, for years, as these Lectures. . . . We confess we had no conception of the strength of evidence in favor of such a theory till we read his work." *Our Israelitish Origin,* 5.

After the publication of his book in 1840 he found it necessary to devote more time to his profession (including work on the Mimpriss System) "in order to acquire the means of labouring freely for the further diffusion of light, when the way should be opened to me."[28] Though Wilson admitted that there was much in his theory which needed to be further investigated and examined, virtually no one attempted to do so for three decades. Many of the later leading authors of the movement (Edward Hine, Charles Piazzi Smyth, Rev. Robert Polwhele) first came to know of the Identity through either hearing Wilson lecture or reading his works, but none of them was immediately prodded into action by his teachings. "In a short time," the eminent ancient historian George Rawlinson of Oxford explained, "Mr. Wilson and his book were forgotten, and our theological literature from 1845 to 1870 shows, we believe, no trace of his opinion having been adopted by any writer of any (or even no) reputation."[29]

Wilson's ideas were not, however, as inconsequential as Professor Rawlinson made them out to be. Wilson himself published several other writings which elaborated his points and, in the last few years of his life, he edited and wrote nearly all the articles for the first periodical devoted to the subject.[30] He also continued his lecturing and usually

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[28]Wilson, "Preface to the Third London Edition," in *Our Israelitish Origin,* 3rd American ed., viii; also, Wilson, *The Title Deeds of the Holy Land, and Identification of the Heir,* 2d ed., enl. (London: James Nisbet, 1873), 8.

[29]Rawlinson, "Where are the Ten Tribes?": 426.

[30]Wilson, *The Millennium, or the World to Come; and its Relations to the Preceding Dispensations* (Cheltenham, 1842; 2d ed., London: J. Nisbet, 1892); *Sketches of Some of the Scriptural Evidences Respecting the So-called Lost House of Israel. Chiefly the Notes of a Lady of Three Lectures Given in Guildhall; Bath, February, 1843* (Bath: H. E. Carrington, 1843); *Book of Inheritance; and the Witness of the Prophets Respecting*

attracted good-sized audiences. More importantly, there were at least three scholars who gave significant notice to Wilson's ideas during the time Rawlinson pronounced it dead.[31] The first to do so was the Rev. Frederick Robert Augustus Glover. Glover, who would serve as Chaplain to the British Consulate in Cologne and whose son, Sir John Hawley Glover, went on to distinguish himself in the Ashantee War in 1873, had studied Irish antiquities for several years and determined that sections of the tribe of Judah had taken refuge in and soon ruled over the Emerald Isle. In about 1845, Glover came across Wilson's *Our Israelitish Origin* and subsequently wrote to the author, "now I find that what I had conjectured is indeed the reality of the case."[32] Glover's ideas were, to say the least, unique. He found traditional legends and archeological evidence which suggested that Hebrews of the seafaring tribe of Dan (Tuatha de Danaan) had made their way to Ireland before the Assyrian Captivity. Furthermore, after the fall of Jerusalem (c. 600 BC), the prophet Jeremiah made his way to Ireland. He brought with him the Ark of the Covenant, Jacob's Pillow, and Tea Tephi the daughter of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. She soon married the Israelite (Danite) ruler of Ireland and from this union came the present Royal

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*Ephraim, and the Raising Up of Israel.* (London, 1846); ed., *Watchmen of Ephraim*, nos. 1-11 (1866-68).

[31]Apart from the three scholars discussed below, the Rev. Joseph Taylor Goodsir, F.R.S.E., composed a series of lectures in 1870 in which he briefly but favorably considered the ideas of John Wilson. These lectures were not published until 1871, so it is not surprising that Rawlinson did not consider them. Nevertheless, Wilson's ideas did receive attention within them. Goodsir, *Seven Homilies on Ethnic Inspiration: The Evidence Supplied by the Pagan Religions of Both Primaeval and Later Guidance and Inspiration From Heaven* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1871), 27-28 n.1.

[32]Rev. F. R. A. Glover to John Wilson, 28 October, 1845; reprinted in *The National Message* 27 (1948): 31.

Family of Britain. Thus began the idea, ultimately accepted by a number of the Royals, that the Royal Family were direct descendants of King David of Israel.[33] He published his findings in 1861, and by doing so introduced into the British-Israel debate a series of new ideas which would later be taken as truth by the vast majority of British-Israelites.[34]

Wilson's ideas received their first important endorsement, however, from the physician Dr. George Moore, M.R.C.P. (1803-1880), who was much acclaimed in mid-Victorian Britain for his work, *The Power of the Soul Over the Body* (1845) which went through six editions by 1868. Apart from his medical and religious studies, Moore had investigated ancient peoples, languages, and legends for several years. He was specifically interested in a people called the Sacæ, or Sakai. Moore, along with other historians, credited the Sacæ as the ancestors of the Saxons. His researches in India, however, caused him to draw further conclusions which he published in *The Lost Tribes and the Saxons of the East and West* (1861). By studying ancient Indian writings and inscriptions, he also determined the Sacæ to be the ancestors of a people known as the Sac who had invaded and revolutionized India in the centuries before Christ. "We Englishmen," therefore, "are only a branch of the same stock that at an early period revolutionized India, and still maintain the influence of their religious ideas throughout the East, . . . how

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[33]According to reports many years later in the *St. James Gazette* and the *Weekly Scotsman*, Glover had been invited to Windsor by Victoria and Albert after publicizing his ideas. He was informed by the Queen and her Consort, the papers continued, that they had known of this descent for a number of years. *St. James Gazette* 39 (6 September 1899), 13; *Weekly Scotsman* (Edinburgh), 19 November 1904.

[34]Glover, *England: The Remnant of Judah and The Israel of Ephraim* (1861).

wonderful and interesting is the providential position of England at present in respect to our Eastern dominion!"[35]

Though not entirely convinced, Moore found that the idea that the Saxons had descended from the Israelites was not completely without merit. He was aware of the previous theories which found the tribes in peoples such as the Afghans and the Nestorians; these, however, he found less than convincing. Moore was also a student of prophecy and knew that the true descendants of the tribes must be in possession of the great temporal blessings which were their birthright. Neither the Afghans nor the Nestorians could claim to possess any of these. However,

> a book was published some time since (by Mr. J. Wilson, of Brighton), entitled *Our Israelitish Origin*. This was too much opposed to the views of the popular expositors to be received with the candour it deserved; but it must be acknowledged that Mr. Wilson in that work has done much more to meet the requirements of prophecy than any that preceded him; and although we dare not follow him into all the results to which he would lead us, still he has shown a large amount of probability, and indeed very much of the letter of Scripture, in favour of the opinion he advocated, namely that the Saxons are descendants of Israelites as opposed from the Jews.[36]

Moore's book was highly scholarly, if also highly controversial, and Moore was respected in both medical and religious circles. His advocacy, though reserved, of Wilson's ideas was an important step forward for the spread of the Identity. Later British-Israelites used portions of Moore's work for the historical proof of Israel's wanderings into Britain.[37]

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[35]George Moore, M. D, *The Lost Tribes and the Saxons of the East and the West, with New Views of Buddhism, and Translations of Rock-Records in India* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861), 92.

[36]Ibid., 94.

[37]Oxonian, *Israel's Wanderings*, 57-64.

Furthermore, his linking of Britain racially and Providentially with its Indian holdings pre-shadows the underlying motive power behind the later movement, viz., as an explanation for the existence of the British Empire and world dominion.

In *Ancient Pillar Stones of Scotland* (1865), virtually a follow-up to *The Lost Tribes*, Moore draws the connection between the Israelites and the Saxons even closer. He accepts and elaborates upon Wilson's explanation for the etymology of the name Saxon. This etymology became the focus of much ridicule for the later British-Israelite critics. It was, nevertheless acceptable to Dr. Moore, and was founded on principles followed by the ancient historian Sharon Turner, and later laid out by Professor F. Max Müller.[38] "But if Israelites," Moore rightly asks, "how came they to be called Sac or Sakai? First, because they boasted of their descent from Isaac, and were called after Isaac in their own country; and secondly, because this happened to fall in the word (?) Sakai, which signified tribes in Media and Persia, a name therefore by which they were notorious. As the 'I' in the word Isaac is only an affix, and not essential to the name, it would be dropped the more easily in the patronymic; and then, as with the Sammarians, the middle 'ch' would be softened, as we have it, and as it is in the word Isaac in all lan-

[38]While neither of these authors connect the Saxons to the Israelites, Turner connects the Sacæ to the Saxons and Müller suggests that *suna* is the old Saxon word for "sons" i.e. "Sacæ-suna" would mean "sons of the Sacæ" or Saxons. Sharon Turner, *The History of the Anglo-Saxons from the Earliest Period to the Norman Conquest.* 5th ed. (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1828), 1: 100-101; Friedrich Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop* (London: Longmans, Green, 1867-75), 2: 501.

guages but the pure Hebrew."[39] Thus Moore gave an air of legitimacy to Wilson's work and ideas. Though he by no means created a mass interest in the Identity in the 1860s, he did encourage later scholars and clergy to look into Wilson's ideas to see what merit they might hold.

To Charles Piazzi Smyth (1819-1900) goes the most significant credit for keeping Wilson's ideas before the public. Smyth, a Fellow of both the Royal Society of London and of Edinburgh, taught astronomy at University of Edinburgh and for over forty years served as the Astronomer Royal for Scotland. Not only was Smyth a highly religious man, his academic and scientific credentials were nearly beyond dispute. His embracing of Wilson's teaching was the product of an independent, though related, investigation. The results, however, introduced a new and very popular subject into the whole British-Israel question. Around 1860 Smyth read John Taylor's book, *The Great Pyramid, Why Was it Built? and Who Built It?* (1859).[40] Taylor's thesis was that the Great Pyramid, unlike the other pyramids in Egypt, served not as a tomb but a repository for a Divine system of weights and measures. The Pyramid, according to Taylor, had been built by Melchizedek (whom he identifies with either Noah or Shem) according to the perfectly earth commensurate measurements bestowed upon him by God. Moreover, Taylor con-

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[39]Moore, M.R.C.P., *Ancient Pillar Stones of Scotland: Their Significance and Bearing on Ethnology.* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1865; London: Savill and Edwards, 1865), 104.

[40]John Taylor, *The Great Pyramid: Why Was it Built? and Who Built It?* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859). Taylor's book received the attention of, and partially favorable reception by, the eminent astronomer Sir John Herschel, "British Modular Standard of Length," *The Athenæum* (28 April 1860): 581-82.

cluded that the ancient Divine measurements used in the construction of the Pyramid corresponded almost exactly to modern British measurements indicating that Britain had also been Divinely blessed.[41] Smyth was almost immediately convinced of this thesis and, working from Taylor's and others' research, issued the first edition of his *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid* in 1864. In this work Smyth mostly repeated and gave scientific corroboration for Taylor's conclusions, though he had no first-hand knowledge of the Pyramid itself. In November of that year he set out, at his own expense, to explore and measure the Pyramid for himself. With the help of his wife, Jesse, he spent several months meticulously measuring the Great Pyramid. Upon his return to Scotland he issued his findings in a three volume work, *Life and Work at the Great Pyramid* for which he was awarded the Keith Prize, the highest honor given by the Royal Society of Edinburgh.[42]

While in Egypt, Smyth became aware of John Wilson's work on the Israelitish origin of the Anglo-Saxons.[43] It made sense, he came to believe, that British weights and

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[41]Taylor, however, was not the first to notice the similarity between British and Pyramid measures. In the seventeenth century, the Oxford astronomer, John Greaves, came to a similar conclusion which was later published in, *The Origine and Antiquity of Our English Weights and Measures Discover'd, By Their Near Agreement with Such Standards that Are Now in One of the Egyptian Pyramides. Together With the Explanation of Divers Lines Therein heretofore Measure'd* (London: G. Sawbridge, 1706).

[42]Charles Piazzi Smyth, *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid. With Photograph, Maps, and Plates* (London: W. Ibister & Co., 1864); idem, *Life and Work at the Great Pyramid During the Months of January, February, March, and April, A.D. 1865. With a Discussion of the Facts Ascertained*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1867).

[43]Smyth, *Life and Work at the Great Pyramid*, 3: 582-91.

measures resembled so closely those of the ancient Hebrews because the lost Israelites had brought them into Britain. For the rest of his life, even at the cost of resigning his Fellowship in the Royal Society of London, Smyth was not only an adherent but an active supporter and prolific author in support of British-Israelism, specifically the role of the Pyramid in Identity thought.[44] His later writings on the subject, including the next four editions of his *Our Inheritance*, became increasingly devoted to the idea of the Israelitish origin of the Anglo-Saxon people. Though his connection to the movement has been downplayed by his biographers this is not the impression one gets from reviewing his publications and correspondence.[45] Smyth was closely involved with the movement nearly from its inception, writing many articles for its journals, corresponding closely with scores of Identity adherents and writing several works on the Divine and Israelitish nature of the Pyramid.[46] British-Israelites took great pride in the fact that such a well re-

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[44]Smyth contributed dozens of articles to Edward Hine's journals *Life from the Dead* and the *Nation's Glory Leader*, as well as several to the *Banner of Israel.* Moreover he wrote the introduction to a number of British-Israel works as well as publishing works of his own. His resignation from the Royal Society over the issue of Pyramid measures is laid out in his publication of the correspondence between himself and the Society on subject. See Charles Piazzi Smyth, *The Great Pyramid and the Royal Society (London)*, (London: W. Ibister & Co., 1874); original letters found in Archives of the Royal Society London M.C.10.71, M.C.10.79, M.C.10.83, and Archives of the Royal Observatory Edinburgh A12.55.

[45]See H. A. Brück and M. T. Brück, *The Peripatetic Astronomer: The Life of Charles Piazzi Smyth* (Bristol and Philadelphia: Adam Hilger Publishers, 1988), 116-134; Brian Warner, *Charles Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal: His Cape Years, 1834-1845* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkenny, 1983), 133.

[46]To list every contribution of Piazzi Smyth would be to no avail here, please see bibliography. This author found over two hundred letters from more than 30 well-known British-Israelites in Piazzi Smyth's personal papers from the years 1866-86. Most of these indicate a running correspondence with Piazzi Smyth and a discourse on the impor-

spected man of science counted himself among their ranks. His ideas were widely read and, though ridiculed by several other scholars,[47] convinced many about the truth of the Identity.[48] From the start of the organized movement, as witnessed by Smyth's contribu-

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tance of the Pyramid to British-Israel thought. Royal Observatory Edinburgh A.11.47-52; A13.57-59; A14.64-15.67.

[47]For just a few examples among many see Richard A. Proctor, "The Religion of the Great Pyramid" *Fraser's Magazine*, n.s., 15 (March 1877): 331-43; idem, "The Problem of the Great Pyramid," *The Contemporary Review* 36 (1879): 93-119; Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard, President of Columbia College, *The Imaginary Metrological System of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh* (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 1884).

[48]The study of the Pyramid became an important element of British-Israelism. It took on a momentum of its own, many writers concentrating all of their time on this aspect of the Identity alone. Piazzi Smyth was not the only man trained in the sciences who came to look upon the pyramid as an Identity monument. The astronomers Joseph Baxendell, F.R.A.S, and Charles LaGrange, professor of astronomy at the Military School of Brussels, among others also became convinced of the Pyramid's importance to the subject. Books, pamphlets, and articles on the Pyramid proliferated, culminating in the early 1920s with a large and intricately mathematical volume of over 500 pages titled *The Great Pyramid: Its Divine Message*, co-authored by David Davidson and Herbert Aldersmith. This work is to this day seen by the British-Israel World Federation as the definitive work on Pyramid studies. In 1879 Pyramid students in the United States founded The International Institute For Preserving and Perfecting the Anglo-Saxon National and Hereditary Weights and Measures. The members and officers of the organization consisted of engineers and astronomers from the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. Its bi-monthly journal, *The International Standard*, was devoted to articles which extolled the virtues of Anglo-Saxon measures over the French metric system and which further delineated the truths held in the Great Pyramid. While it was not strictly a British-Israel journal, it did accept Identity articles. When one of the first of these appeared the journal reported that it had "aroused more universal interest than any previous paper in our Magazine." Pyramid studies, apart from being simply an addendum or related avenue, became thoroughly intertwined with the Identity, bolstering both its historical and prophetic evidence.

tion to the Conference on Israel of 1872, Pyramid studies played a significant role in the dissemination of the theory.[49]

In October of 1869, just a few months before his death, John Wilson delivered an Identity lecture to a fairly large audience in one of the school rooms during the Anglican October Conference at St. Jude's Church, Mildmay Park. The subject inspired both the vicar of St. Jude's, William Pennefather, and the congregation enough that provisions were made to hold similar discussions each year. This course of events led directly to the Conference on Israel of 1872 and the formation of the Anglo-Ephraim Association in the autumn of that year. Wilson struck the spark which transformed the Identity from an interesting idea into an organized movement. His, Glover's, Moore's, and Smyth's writings found increased readership as the new organizations urged their members to investigate further and contribute what they could to the debate. It was, ironically, only after the "father of the rediscovery of Israel" had died that the history of the *movement* founded upon his ideas truly begins.

**Early Organization and Controversy**

There had been talk of organizing British-Israel belief since the mid-1860s but the lack of leadership and of interest hindered such development until 1872. Even then the extent of the Anglo-Ephraim Association was limited, more by circumstances than design, to believers within the London area. Once organized, the association (as its name indicates) adhered fairly strictly, though not dogmatically, to the 'Teutonic' ideas pro-

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[49]Professor C. Piazzi Smyth, "Proposition III: That Our National Hereditary Weights and Measures, Add Signal Confirmation to Our National and Hereditary Israelitish Descent," in *The Conference on Israel*, 33-47.

pounded by John Wilson. Its primary purpose was to encourage "the prayerful and diligent consideration of the Israelitish origin of our own nation and of the other branches of the Teutonic race." Its organizational structure was loose and the rules were few. Members were required to belong to one of the "Christian Churches" and pay an annual subscription of five shillings. This entitled them to copies of papers and pamphlets on the subject issued by the association as well as notification of Bible readings and prayer meetings. A governing body, the Council, was established and it was to meet "from time to time, to consider questions affecting the objects of the Association."[50] Apart from these, no other organizational guidelines existed. Nevertheless, by 1874, the Association could boast of an impressive Council. Bishop Gobat of Jerusalem, the Rev. J. H. Titcomb (the future Anglican Bishop of Rangoon), Robert Mimpriss, the Rev. John Jenkins, D.D., the Rev. Glover, plus other members of the clergy and military served as members or officers of the Council.

The Anglo-Ephraim Association in its very name and mission was a 'Teutonic' organization. The papers issued by the Association clearly reflected this orientation. It became apparent that another organization was needed to consider the more limited view that Israel was to be found in the British nation *alone*. The Anglo-Israel Association, founded in 1874, opened discussion to those who advocated this Anglo-centric idea. Moreover, the Anglo-Israel Association made it a special point to break out from the London area. To this end, unlike the Anglo-Ephraim Association, it established two

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[50]*Israel, or, The Ten Tribes. Being a Report of a Meeting of the Anglo-Ephraim Association,* 83.

Councils, a Metropolitan and a Provincial. These were set up to deal with the special circumstances which would accompany the spread and study of the subject in these different areas and serve as a link between local groups and the central London association. British-Israel believers around the nation were now represented in a central body. It should be emphasized, however, that the relationship between these two associations was not purely antagonistic. Several of the Council members served in both organizations and there was undoubtedly much dual membership as well. The distinction, however, remained. The Anglo-Ephraim Association remained committed to the idea that the British represented only the tribe of Ephraim. Any other interpretation, it professed, was misguided. While it did not object to the existence of the Anglo-Israel Association, it did want the distinction between the two to remain clear. In fact, a report in Edward Hine's journal *Life From the Dead* of December, 1874 indicating that the two organizations had decided to amalgamate elicited the following response from the Acting Secretary of the Anglo-Ephraim Association:

> this is utterly an error; some names of the Members of our Council appear on the list of the Council of the latter. An individual expression of goodwill has thus been indicated, but this is all. No official action has been taken in the matter; no Council Meeting has been held upon the subject. The statement that "it has therefore been arranged to wind up both organisations," and out of the two to form one, is shown to be an error, by the fact that our Treasurer has never been applied to, nor have I, to whom the secretary, now abroad, has intrusted his office, ever given my consent to such a project. On the contrary, as far as it indirectly reached my notice, I have felt it my duty to declare myself wholly opposed to it.[51]

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[51]Rev. Hibbert Newton, B.A., Acting Secretary, *Israel, or, The Ten Tribes,* 83.

Thus began a debate which never fully disappeared from the history of the British-Israel movement. The Britain-as-Israel school would, by the late 1870s establish itself as the leading interpretation of Identity belief. But the voices of the Teutonic advocates would never be fully silenced.

The overwhelming strength of the Teutonic theory in the early days of the movement, however, is manifest. While the Anglo-Israel Association was founded ostensibly to air those ideas concerning the Britain-as-Israel school, the papers issued by the association and the articles printed in its journal, *The Standard of Israel*, were still heavily Teutonic in content. This was so much the case that the leading proponent of the Britain-as-Israel school, Edward Hine, resigned from the Council of the Anglo-Israel Association and convinced others, including Robert Mimpriss, to do likewise. He had only agreed to serve on the Council of the Association on the understanding that it did not "espouse the Teutonic error." He and Mimpriss, Hine reported, were surprised "at the amazing stupidity of this Association in officially siding with the blunder, and promoting discord and confusion in the grandest and most sacred cause that heaven has ever privileged man to touch."[52] Moreover, W. James Cockburn-Muir issued an open letter to the Council of Association protesting the error of its views. "There are in this question," Mr. Cockburn-Muir explains, "two antagonistic schools, teaching each a doctrine fundamentally opposed to the other." The Teutonic theory "was the crude and rudimentary result of the earlier investigations of the subject." At the time it was excusable, he continued, because

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[52]Edward Hine, "Robert Mimpriss, Esq. -- Obituary," *Leading the Nation to Glory by Our Identification With Lost Israel. A Weekly* Journal 1 (5 January 1876): 386.

people did not understand the ethnic distinction between the English, who were essentially a homogenous people, and the so called 'Teutonic' peoples. Cockburn-Muir quotes ethnologists and historians to show that the popular conception of an ethnic relationship between the English and the continental nations was outmoded and erroneous. This being the case, the Teutonic theory was necessarily false and the espousing of it should immediately cease.[53] Thus from an early stage, controversy played a role in the formation of organized British-Israel belief.

This controversy should not, however, lead one to discount the importance of these early organizations. If the Council of the Anglo-Ephraim Association was impressive, that of the Anglo-Israel Association was even more so. Nearly every one of the two-score members of the Councils (both Metropolitan and Provincial) possessed a University degree, a medical degree, or a senior military ranking.[54] Vicars, professors, doctors, generals, and aristocracy exerted the controlling force over the Association and afforded the belief the legitimacy which was needed for recognition. Moreover, the penetration of the belief into Royal circles was first consummated here. Edward Henry Corbould, the official painter of the Royal household in charge of artistic instruction for the family, served on the Metropolitan Council.[55] Its journal, *The Standard of Israel*, received notice and

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[53]W. J. Cockburn-Muir, "An Open Letter to the Council of the Anglo-Israel Association, London," *Leading the Nation to Glory* 1 (24 November 1875): 337-38.

[54]For a list of Council Members and the purposes of the *Anglo-Israel Association* see: *The Standard of Israel* 1 (July 1875): facing page 33.

[55]*Dictionary of National Biography: Twentieth Century*, s.v. "Corbould, Edward Henry (1815-1905)".

reviews from the outside press. Though not always favorable, the reviews were, in light of the subject, remarkably receptive to the new magazine.[56] The *John O'Groat Journal* wished "every success to a movement designed to further human progress on subjects fraught with national importance." Though finding many of the traces of the migrations "fanciful," the *Daily Review* admitted that "the industry with which these traces are collected is amazing." Its articles, the *Social Review* professed, "indicate close research and investigation," coupled with, the *News of the World* added, "much scholarship as well as literary ability." Towards its advocates, the outside press was surprisingly congenial if not in full sympathy with their beliefs. They were, according to the *New Zealand Herald*, "some of the most enlightened and learned Christians." The *Standard of Israel*, moreover, was conducted by people who, in most cases, could be considered "eminent Christians, and men, beside, of great Biblical learning, blended with ability of no common order."[57] These early organizations established Anglo-Israel thought as a legitimate area of inquiry. It cannot be claimed that rousing success soon followed. Both organizations soon faltered, the *Standard of Israel* lasted for only two volumes (a total of 12 monthly issues), and the press turned antagonistic, condescending, and amused. "The various forms of craziness are really endless," the *Saturday Review* conceded. "But we have never before lighted on a magazine that so distinctly carried on the peculiar vein of craziness

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[56]"Opinions of the Press," *The Standard of Israel* 1 (December 1875): 192.

[57]*The Christian Standard* (London), 10 November 1875.

which has lately supplied us with several occasions of thought."[58] Despite such abusive treatment by certain outlets of the popular press, a body of believers had been established, public recognition of the belief (though not always favorable) had been achieved, and future associations, gaining insights and instruction from the experiences of these pioneers, fared rather better.

**Edward Hine's Work and Influence**

With the demise of the Anglo-Ephraim and Anglo-Israel Associations in the last half of the 1870s, no central organizations remained to represent the interests of the movement. Several small groups had sprung up on the local level to study the question further, but these had very little contact with each other and were only made aware of each other's existence through the periodicals which published reports of their meetings and public lectures. Despite the absence of any central organization, the later 1870s were a time of significant development for the belief itself. This development took place on at least two levels. First, the spread and recognition of the theory made substantial gains. Second, the fundamentals of the Identity underwent a transformation from the Teutonic to the Britain-as-Israel schools. The prime mover behind both of these developments was Edward Hine (1825-1891). Hine's cross-country lectures excited much interest and, according to the local press, were almost always "largely attended" (usually indicating several hundred people). Furthermore, he spent a good deal of time decrying what he termed the "Teutonic error" while presenting his view that the British nation represented all the

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[58]"The Standard of Israel," *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art* 42 (21 October 1876): 506.

tribes of lost Israel and not Ephraim alone. This interpretation appealed much more acutely to the racial and imperial pride that emerged in Britain during the last thirty years of the century. Hine's work not only made possible successful organization in 1879, it also determined the form of the belief which the most important of these organizations would espouse.

Hine was one of the earliest believers in the Identity. He had first come to know of it from a lecture by John Wilson which he attended in his teens in 1840. Hine, like most people, had always read the Bible confusing the term 'Israel' with that of 'Jews'. Central to British-Israel belief is the understanding that in the prophetic books of the Bible, the term Israel refers to the ten tribes of the northern kingdom, while the Jews were Israelites only from the two tribes of the southern kingdom of Judah. Confounding the two peoples, Hine believed, made the Bible "a mass of contradictions, and much of it sheer nonsense, when read under this wrong impression." It was at the lecture, he later recounted, that the "good Mr. Wilson took this dark veil from off my eyes."

> I saw that it was equivalent to crediting the Prophets with absurdity, to arrive at the conclusion that Israel should possess a multitudinous seed, whilst at the same time Judah was to be 'few in number,' and suppose they could refer to the same people. It became evident to my mind, that a people could not become an 'Island Nation,' with their 'Isles' in the 'north-west,' and at the same time be a 'dispersed' and 'crushed' people; that they could not be the strongest war power on earth and at the same time be 'without might' 'serving their enemies;' that they could not be in possession of colonies, 'desolate heritages,' 'possessions,' and yet have no inheritance excepting in themselves; that they could not be a redeemed and Christian people, and be under the Mosaic law. I saw these and a hundred other gross inconsistencies, direct contradictions, and ridiculous misrepresentations to be in existence, under the impression that the prophecies of Israel referred to the Jews.[59]

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[59]Edward Hine, "The Story of Our Birth," *Life From the Dead: Being a National Bell-Ringing Journal Advocating the Identity of the British Nation with the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel* 1 (December 1873): 1.

With the distinction between the two peoples kept in mind, the Bible became a new book to him. He concluded that only one nation, Great Britain, possessed all the distinguishing marks of Israel. The riddle surrounding the chosen people of God was now solved. Yet until 1870 Hine kept his ideas and his new-found belief to himself. This private creed became public declaration upon the urging of friends with the publication, in 1870, of a twenty-nine page pamphlet entitled *Seventeen Positive Identifications of the English Nation with the Lost House of Israel.* Before the next year the seventeen identifications had grown into twenty-seven, and within a few years into forty-seven.[60]

The *Identifications* were an immediate sensation. By May of 1872, the *Twenty-Seven Identifications* had sold 66,000 copies with sales steady.[61] By August of that year,

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[60]Hine, *Seventeen Positive Identifications of the English Nation with the Lost House of Israel. Dedicated (by Permission) to the Right Honourable Wm. Ewart Gladstone, Esq., MP., D.C.L. , First Lord of the Treasury* London: G. J. Stevenson; Manchester: J. Heywood; Edinburgh: J. Menzies & Co., 1870); *Twenty-Seven Identifications Of the English Nation with the Lost House of Israel. Founded Upon 300 Scripture Proofs and Shewing the Charter of Her Colonies from the Bible, English Emigration Willed by God* (Manchester: J. Heywood; Birmingham: Richard Davies; Aberdeen: Jas. Murray; Edinburgh: J. Menzies & Co.; Glasgow: James McGeachy; Brighton: H. & C. Treacher; Bristol: Wm. Mack; Bath: D. B. Pearson; Bradford: J. F. Hammond; Sheffield: Hopkins & Son; Leicester: Winks & Son; Liverpool: William Gilling; London: W. T. Allen, 1871); *Forty-Seven Identifications of the British Nation with the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel: Founded upon Five Hundred Scripture Proofs, Dedicated to the (So-Called) British People by their Kinsman* (London: W.H. Guest; S.W. Partridge, 1874).

[61]Edward Hine, London, to Professor Charles Piazzi Smyth, Edinburgh, 28 May 1872, Transcript in the hand of Edward Hine, Archives of the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh, A 11.49.

the total had reached 74,000.[62] Other writings, which he issued shortly afterwards, explained and expanded upon his ideas. *Flashes of Light*, *England's Coming Glories*, and *The Anglo-Saxon Riddle* (written in conjunction with the Rev. William Henry Burr) all appeared within a few years of the *Identifications*.[63] These writings were favorite targets for opponents of the Identity. Rawlinson's article in *The Leisure Hour* was directed almost solely at Hine's writings. *The Saturday Review*, calling him "The Prophet Hine", explained that he had "been pouring out his ridiculous pamphlets for some time. We have now received the fifth of them [*The Anglo-Saxon Riddle*], of which nine thousand have been sold. The first, we hear, has gained a circulation of ninety thousand."[64] Despite these attacks, Hine's writings continued to sell and his popularity seemed to increase with all the publicity.

But more than simply a popular pamphleteer, Hine was, in a very real sense, an innovator in British-Israel theory. He was, in fact, if not the originator then the strongest promoter of the Britain-as-Israel school. To Edward Hine, Britain did not simply

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[62]Edward Hine, London, to Professor Charles Piazzi Smyth, Edinburgh, 22 August 1872, Transcript in the hand of Edward Hine, Archives of the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh, A 11.49.

[63]Hine, *Flashes of Light: Being Part 2 of Forty-Seven Identifications of the British Nation with the Lost House of Israel.* (London: W. T. Allen, 1871); *England's Coming Glories: Being the Fourth Part of the Identifications of the English Nation with Lost Israel* (Glasgow: H. Nisbet, 1873); Hine and Rev. William Henry Burr, *The Anglo-Saxon Riddle; or, The Riddle Of Our Origin, Present Grandeur and Future Greatness* (London: W.H. Guest, 1873).

[64]"The Prophet Hine," *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art* 37 (31 January 1874): 148.

represent the chief tribe of the House of Israel, Ephraim, but embodied within its shores and its colonies all ten tribes of the northern kingdom. He acknowledged his and the nation's debt to Wilson for surely "no man has rendered, or now ever can render, such illustrious service to our country."[65] Yet despite his gratitude and respect, Hine believed that Wilson had "never expressed the Identity, [and] by no means understood the subject. The value of his services, great in itself, being his bringing out the distinction of Israel from Judah." Wilson's ideas, however, were of the Teutonic school "a most repulsive and erroneous form."[66] Though Hine had no contact with Wilson after the 1840 lecture he considered himself both his successor and reformer. Wilson had died almost immediately after the appearance of Hine's first work, and Hine regretted that he had never again spoken to him "because truth must give me boldness to declare that I possessed many corrections to make, and many improvements to offer upon his method of handling the subject."[67] He believed that God had imparted to him the true interpretation of the Identity, that of Israel being in the British nation and race alone. By the end of the decade Hine could announce with confidence that his ideas were the only way "by which the Identity can be made *understandable.* This view is now adopted, through us, by all real, right-minded students of the Bible."[68]

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[65]Ben-Israel, *Memoirs and a Selection of Letters From the Correspondence of Edward Hine*, 11.

[66]*The Nation's Glory Leader* 7 (5 February 1879): 6.

[67]Hine, "The Story of Our Birth," 3 n.

[68]*The Nation's Glory Leader* 7 (5 February 1879): 6.

Hine's energy and devotion to the cause cannot be denied. Apart from his several writings, he also edited two journals devoted to the subject during the 1870s. His first, the monthly *Life From the Dead,* lasted for seven years (1873-1880). His next venture, issued weekly, also met with considerable success, lasting from early 1875 until late 1880. His writing and editorial work, however, did not stop him from his lecturing, the activity he loved most of all. Throughout the 1870s, he lectured to large audiences around the country.[69] Though not invariably, the local press often reported and commented on his lectures. These reports Hine collected and reprinted in his magazine, afraid that "if left to furnish our own reports we might be vain enough to apply for some good polish." In late 1877 and early 1878 he lectured to enough audiences across the country and collected enough reports that he was able to reprint them in a special "Lecture Number" of his weekly magazine in January, 1878. "We suppose," he explained, "it to be a sign that the Identity interest is known to be on the growth; for we have been highly favoured by lengthy reports."[70] In 1884 Hine took his message across "the herring pond." He began a lecturing tour through eastern Canada and the north-eastern United States, his reception in Canada being somewhat better than in its southern neighbor. While he attracted large audiences in both countries, he was rather disappointed by the lack of real interest shown by some American audiences, especially

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[69]Though most of Hine's audiences numbered in the few hundred, a high point was reached December 10, 1878, when he lectured in Exeter Hall, the Strand, to an audience of approximately two thousand. Isaac Loveland, *A Few Particulars in the Early Work of the Late Edward Hine* (London: The Marshall Press, 1900), 2.

[70]*The Nation's Glory Leader* 5 (16 January 1878): 277.

in Buffalo, New York and other areas around the Great Lakes with large German populations. In his several months in the United States, however, he estimated that he had addressed "fully a million of people." His schedule in Canada was even more grueling. He was booked months in advance throughout southern Ontario, having only thirteen days free from January 1 to April 7, 1886. The local clergy opened their churches and pulpits to him and he reported that he often had "3 and 4 hundred people unable to gain attendance" at his lectures.[71] The tour, however, was not a complete success. Lack of money and failing health forced him to cancel his planned trip across the Mississippi to California and eventually to Australia. Instead, he returned, penniless, to England in early 1888. Though he continued his lecturing work his poor health slowed him down considerably.

Hine's importance in the definition and spread of the British-Israel idea cannot be overestimated. From 1870 until his death in 1891 he was one of the central figures in almost every aspect of the cause: writing, lecturing, and debating. He was a tireless worker, devoting the last twenty years of his life and every penny he had to the spread of the Identity. His writings were often controversial and many of the authors who took up their pens against the British-Israel idea found a convenient target in the person and writings of Edward Hine.[72] Even many fellow British-Israelites admitted that in his zeal

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[71]Edward Hine, Simcoe, Ontario, to Charles Piazzi Smyth, Edinburgh, 22 February 1886, Transcript in the hand of Edward Hine, Archives of the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh, A 15.71.

[72]*The English Nation Not the House of Israel: Being a Refutation of the Theory of Mr. E. Hine. By a Christian Clergyman* (London: Haughton & Co., 1873); Clericus, *The Anglo-Israel Theory of Mr. E Hine and Philo-Israel Completely Refuted from Holy*

to promote the cause he sometimes overstepped the bounds of reason and moderation. They were at times harsh on him but, as one writer said, much forbearance was needed since "of necessity much rubbish will be mixed with the precious ore in digging this mine of truth."[73] His work, however, was extremely popular and many British-Israelites first came to know the Identity from his writings and lectures. For a long time, most people (including himself) believed Hine to be the Identity's leading promoter.[74]

Hine's interest in spreading the Identity, however, stopped short of promoting an organized movement. He had long believed that the best way of educating people in and defending the Identity was on a personal basis. He had no objection to formal gatherings

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*Scripture* (Leeds: Goodall, 1875); J. C. McClellan. *Anglo-Israelism: Its Pernicious Nature Fully Exposed* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1876); Wilkinson, *Englishmen not Israelites*; Member of the University of Dublin, *A Reply to Mr. Hine's Assumed Identification of the British Nation with the Lost Tribes of Israel, &c.; Together with Some Remarks on the Antiquities, Early History, and Subsequent Colonization of Ireland.* (Dublin: George Herbert, 1880); W. F., *A Complete Answer of Mr. Hine's Forty-Seven Identifications Of the British Nation with the Lost Tribes of Israel* (London: E. West & Co., 1880).

[73]Sylvester, *The Heir of the World*, x; see also, Dr. Protheroe Smith, *The Identity of Israel With the English and Kindred Races* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1873), 7; A. L. Lewis, Honorary Secretary London Anthropological Society, *British Celts and Teutons Not the Lost Tribes* (London: A. L. Lewis, 1874), 10; Philo-Israel, *Are the English People the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel? An Inquiry into the Truth of the Alleged Identification of the British Nation with the Lost Tribes* (London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1875), iv; Philo-Israel, *Anglo-Israelism True, Not False. Being an Answer to the Rev. Canon C.D. Bell, D.D.* (London: Robert Banks, 1881), 16; Rev. Robert Douglas, M.A., Vicar of Kidsgrove, *Ephraim-England: The XIXth Century Revelation of the Fruits of History* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886), 6.

[74]*Nation's Glory Leader* 7 (5 February 1879): 5-6. A. Malachi, in his *Letters on the Anglo-Israel Folly* (Truro, NS: Robert McConnell, 1880), refers repeatedly to the Identity theory as "Hinism."

to discuss the issue; he himself had been at the Mildmay Conference of 1872. Though local Identity groups often sponsored his lectures, Hine remained wary, however, of establishing any formal connection with them.[75] His experience with the Anglo-Israel Association in 1874-75, the only Identity organization to which he ever belonged, made him even more suspicious of the wisdom and effectiveness of centralized Identity bodies. He had had no trouble defending the Identity against its critics, confronting such heavy-weights as Professor Rawlinson, A. L. Lewis, and the *Saturday Review* without the help or resources of an association.[76] In 1879, he took part in a three night's debate with the Rev. Robert Roberts, an eminent preacher and a leading Christadelphian, a popular religious sect which denied both the Trinity and the efficacy of infant baptism.[77] Interest in the subject was keen enough without an official body's sponsorship that the debate was, by all accounts, greatly attended.[78] By the late 1870s, Hine was being pressured into

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[75]See *Nation's Glory Leader* 4 (21 March 1877): 66, for report of a lecture given by Hine in Margate sponsored by the Margate Anglo-Israel Identification Association. For Hine's suspicions about becoming involved with organizations see, *Life from the Dead* 1 (January 1874): 91-92.

[76]Hine, *Oxford Wrong in Objecting to the English Being Identical with Israel, Edward Hine's Reply to Canon Rawlinson* (London: R. Banks, 1872); Hine, "Review of 'The Alleged Identification of the English Nation with the 'Lost House of Israel' by A. L. Lewis, Honorary Secretary of the London Anthropological Society," *Life From the Dead* 1(8: 1874): 314-19, (9:1874): 350-52; Hine, "The Saturday Review" *Life From the Dead* 1 (April 1874): 196-97.

[77]For a discussion of Christadelphianism see *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion*, 1979 ed., s.v. "Christadelphians," by P.K. Meagher. An interesting side note, the founder of this sect, Dr. John Thomas, wrote a good deal about the destiny of Great Britain as the representative of prophetic Tarshish. See chapter one, note 141.

[78]*Are Englishmen Israelites? A Three-Nights' Debate Between Mr. Edward Hine and Mr. Robert Roberts in Exeter Hall, London, On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday,*

supporting a new central organization. His refusal caused a good deal of animosity, especially between himself and Edward Wheeler Bird (known widely by his *nom de plume,* Philo-Israel), the leading proponent of a central organization and an emerging leader in the spread of the Identity.[79]

Hine believed, with some cause, that Bird's pressure for organizing was greatly motivated by a desire to homogenize the Identity's message. Bird had criticized Hine in the past for his unwarranted identifications and believed that a central body could better control the specific points of British-Israel thought.[80] Such control, Hine believed, would be divisive and he warned that "a house divided cannot stand. The Identity cause divided would be the woe upon him from whom the offense came." He asserted that unlike Bird he was not trying to establish an orthodox code but that "we simply claim, and this we have always done, freedom to express our judgments." Bird's efforts to strengthen the cause through organization were, in Hine's opinion, driving a wedge between believers. "In the matter of the Identity, good-will is wanted, not organisation. Associations, at their best, will mostly waste resources, and do little."[81] When the new central association did

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*April 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, 1879. Lord William Lennox in the Chair* (London: F. Pitman, 1879).

[79]The conflict between Hine and Bird on the necessity and desirability of a central organization is detailed in John Wilson, "The History and Organization of British-Israelism" (D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1966).

[80]Philo-Israel, *Are the English People the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel? An Inquiry into the Truth of the Alleged Identification of the British Nation with the Lost Tribes* (London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1875).

[81]*The Nation's Glory Leader* 7 (5 February 1879): 5-6.

appear in 1879, Hine took no part in it and continued his work for the most part independently.[82]

It is not too much to say, however, that despite his opposition to the idea of organizing, Hine's contributions made organization of the movement in 1879 possible. Through his writings and lectures, Hine kept the belief alive during the late-1870s when the centralized associations failed. His *Identifications* had sold well over a hundred thousand copies by 1880 and he received thousands of testimonials from across the country about the value of his work.[83] His ideas were known in the United States, throughout Europe and even found their way into the far corners of the empire. On June 26th, 1877, John May of the United Service Institute wrote to Hine from his station at Malta. May had collected a total of £2.1s.6d. from seventeen of his associates to further the spread of the Identity. "I was requested some time ago (by some believers on Malta of our Israelitish origin) to open a subscription list to assist you in circulating the glorious news contained on your Identity works," May wrote,

> I have had to order over five dozen 'Forty-seven Identifications' in the last three months, also four copies of the first five pamphlets bound together, the whole of the back numbers of 'Life From the Dead,' and several more subscribers for 'Life from the Dead,' and 'Glory Leader;' this is the greatest number I have disposed of in so

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[82]Though Hine was generally wary of organization, in 1880 he did form The British-Israel Identity Corporation. This was more a business venture than an association of believers. The Corporation sponsored a journal and issued a good deal of literature, but it was not designed to organize British-Israelites or strengthen ties between local associations. The Corporation was never financially viable, and failed soon after its inception. Loveland, *A Few Particulars of the Early Work of the Late Edward Hine*, 2.

[83]Hine included a selection of these at the front of his *Oxford Wrong,* and nearly ever issue of his periodicals ended with a section of correspondence, often containing several letters from around the country praising his work.

> short a time, with the exception of about six years ago, or soon after your 'Twenty-seven Identifications" first came under my notice.[84]

May reported that the regiment of six years ago had now dispersed to many parts of the world including the East Indies, China, Bermuda, Canada, Gibraltar, taking the literature and the Identity with them. By the time the Metropolitan Anglo-Israel Association was formed in January 1879, there were several local associations across the country and throughout the empire. Moreover, Hine's belief that the British race alone was composed of the ten tribes had become, by the end of the decade, the dominant interpretation of the subject. When the new association was established, under the direction of Philo-Israel, it was without a doubt devoted to this idea. None of this is to imply that Hine was alone in the spread of the Identity at this time. Local associations held public lectures given by their own members and published them for nationwide distribution. Philo-Israel began, in 1877, *The Banner of Israel,* which would become the longest lasting British-Israel journal and would reach a subscription of 1,500 across the country. Nevertheless it was Hine, more than any one else, who kept the interest in the Identity alive in the 1870s and made organization possible in 1879.

**Organizational Successes and Setbacks**

The idea of a centralized network of associations began with the recognition that while there were numerous British-Israel groups throughout the country, there was no organized body of believers in London itself. "It has long been felt," the Rev. James Billington, F.R.H.S., reported,

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[84]Letter reprinted as "A Valued Testimonial From Malta," *The Nation's Glory Leader* 4 (18 July 1877): 277.

> that the cause of our Identity with the Lost Tribes of the House of Israel ought to be adequately represented in the Metropolis by an influential Association. Such organizations are rapidly being formed in many towns in the provinces. In the colonial Empire, also, city after city is taking up the subject, and Associations are springing up to carry on the work of spreading the good news That Lost Israel is found.' In the Metropolis of the Empire alone no action of a permanent character has been taken. Former efforts in this direction made by believers in our Hebrew origin failed, for reasons which it is not necessary here particularly to detail. Suffice it to say, the ground is now clear, and the time has come when, in the opinion of many who are ardently devoted to the propagation of this glorious truth in London, an Association in connection with it ought forthwith to be set on foot.[85]

Accordingly, on January 8, 1879, the Metropolitan Anglo-Israel Association was founded to meet this need. Within the first four months of its existence, the Metropolitan Association had received subscriptions of 2s.6d. or more from over one hundred and fifty people. In all, by April 26th, 1879, the balance sheet of the Association listed total receipts from subscriptions and donations as £187.17s.8d., a quite respectable sum for the time. This total, moreover, did not include a donation of £310. from W. H. Peters, Esq., J.P., whose obvious devotion to the cause earned him election to the body of Vice-Presidents.[86]

The membership rolls of the Association were gilded with names from the clergy, military, the professions, and aristocracy. Among those who attended the First Annual Meeting were the Duke of Mantua, the Count and Countess of Bentinck, Sir Leopold McClintock, General Burgh, Colonel LeHardy, Colonel Bentinck, the eminent musician Henry Leslie, Esq., Dr. G.P. Rugg, Lady Jane Ellice, Rev. Dr. Moore, and Admiral

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[85]Rev. James Billington, F.R.H.S., Honorary Secretary, "Prospectus," *Metropolitan Anglo-Israel Association. Report of the Proceedings at the First Annual Meeting*, 3.

[86]For the list of subscribers, amounts, and balance sheet see ibid, 45-47.

Alexander Dunn, who occupied the chair. The members had gathered, in part, to elect the officers and appoint a committee for the following year. These positions, as well, were taken almost exclusively by men of high social standing. The Presidency alone was left unoccupied until a suitable candidate could be found. By the next year this position was taken by Viscount Folkestone, M.P., the future Earl of Radnor. The selection of the most socially elevated to publicly represent the Association was undertaken to encourage local groups around the country to affiliate with the London (central) Association. Also, members hoped, the Association might be recognized and publicized more widely if prominent persons were seen to have taken an active part.

Initially, the rules and requirements of the Association were rather vague. A subscription of 2s.6d. entitled any interested person to membership. The purpose of the Association was described simply as: "To disseminate the knowledge of the fact that the Anglo-Saxons are now identified with the Lost Tribes of the House of Israel." The Committee encouraged members to use "all lawful efforts to propagate the glorious truths which cluster around the Identity,...[to] appeal to all their fellow-believers in the Metropolis to rally round them, [and] to enroll themselves as Members of the Association now formed."[87] No rules delineating the exact role and responsibilities of officers, or the process of affiliating local groups to the central Association were set forth until the second year of the Metropolitan Association's existence. During its first few months the new Association looked similar to the old Anglo-Israel and Anglo-Ephraim Associations. It was, like those, simply a loose body of fellow adherents to a cause. Without a rigid

[87]Ibid., 3-4.

structure, however, these old bodies had simply faded away. The leaders of the Metropolitan Association, well aware of this fact, concentrated their early efforts on creating a strong framework for their new organization. In June of 1880, they adopted a detailed set of rules which governed every aspect of the Association from the election and role of officers and committee members to the affiliation of branch associations and the auditing of accounts.[88] Organizationally, the movement now stood on more solid ground than in earlier years.

Encouraging events of the previous year lent an air of optimism to the Second Annual Meeting of the Metropolitan Association in June 1880. Membership to the Association had grown to over three hundred. Twenty-seven branch association, consisting of an additional 1,500 members, now held affiliation. The Rt. Hon. Viscount Folkestone assumed the office of President (as noted above) and the Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Rangoon topped the list of Vice-Presidents.[89] Over one hundred public lectures had been given around the country over the past year, often attracting six hundred to a thousand listeners. The Rev. Billington, the Secretary of the Association and an active lecturer, reported that at one place he spoke to an audience of 1,500.[90] With increased interest and continued financial stability, the Association had been able to move to larger

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[88]Metropolitan Anglo-Israel Association, *Report for the Year Ending 30th April, 1880, Containing Prospectus, Rules, Balance Sheet, List of Subscribers, and Account of Proceedings at the Second Annual Meeting, Held at Exeter Hall, on Tuesday Evening, 1st June, 1880* (London: Office of the Society, 1880), 5-8.

[89]Ibid., 9.

[90]Ibid, 25-26.

offices. Though the total from subscriptions was less than the previous year, another large donation from W.H. Peters (£200) balanced the books of the association and allowed increased activity in the spread of the Identity. When the evening session of the meeting began, over six hundred people crowded the room, with many having to be turned away for lack of space.[91]

Despite all the positive signs, those who attended and spoke at the meeting knew the difficulties which lay before them. Membership, money, and image all posed great, if not insuperable, problems. From attendance at lectures and sales of books and other literature, it was evident that believers numbered far more than paid-up members. There were hundreds perhaps even thousands of people who, while interested in the Identity, belonged to no organization. These people denied the movement not only important membership strength, but also the needed dues-revenue to carry out the spread of the message. In his Presidential Address, Viscount Folkestone recognized that many believers who had shunned the idea of an organization "have thought differently since, and have joined our association." Others, however, had yet to be persuaded that belonging to an organization was an advantage. Many of these people, the President continued, had thought organizing was an act of "supererogation," that God would let the Identity be known in His time, without the help of mankind. But, he confessed, that "the Almighty makes use of human agency to carry out his intention . . . and in order that we may carry on our work it is necessary that we not only work with human agency, but we

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[91]Ibid., 15.

also require human money."[92] Members were encouraged not only to make sure their dues were paid in full, but to convince fellow believers to join the Metropolitan Association or their local group. Also hindering membership and the spread of the belief was the increasing ridicule which the Identity was subjected to by the outside press and more learned critics. Criticism, however, they were told by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Douglas Onslow, J.P., should not be daunting: "we are sadly taken to task by our opponents," he explained, "we are often called bad names, we are said to be deluded, we are called crazy. Mind, I do not believe we are; and I can only say that I do not see many on this platform, who, so far as I am a judge, appear fit for a lunatic asylum. (Laughter.) We are met with serious opposition, but that opposition is very useful; it does good, it stirs us up and prevents us from becoming indifferent."[93] Critics should be answered. Their objections must be treated seriously, publicly, and fully. In this way, if British-Israelites could not convince their critics, they might at least persuade others that the belief could be defended rationally and should not be shunned out of a sense of shame. Everyone believed the road ahead would be demanding, but the foundations were now in place to meet these difficulties and foster future growth.

The success of the new Association was slow but steady. Though it had no official organ to publicize its events or ideas, it used the existing publications, *The Banner of Israel* issued weekly since 1877 and the annual *Anglo-Israel Almanack* (issued from 1879), to keep its members informed and connected. From these publications members

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[92]Viscount Folkestone, M.P., "Presidential Address," ibid., 17-18.

[93]Douglas A. Onslow, J.P., "Address," ibid., 23.

could find out about public lectures, read reviews of lectures reprinted from local papers around the country, find out where and when their local branch would meet, as well as read articles which dealt with all topics of interest in furthering the Identity. In its early days the Metropolitan Association achieved one of its major goals, that of centralization. Many of the local associations affiliated themselves with it almost from the beginning. These organizations paid dues to the central office and could appeal for lectures to be held in their area. The Association was able to sponsor over one hundred lectures nearly every year and send "official lecturers" around the country. Local groups also met regularly and had their own members speak and write on the subject. Sales of books, pamphlets, periodicals, and the annual *Almanack* were strong, so much so that two publishing houses, Robert Banks & Son and W.H. Guest, could afford to print almost nothing other than Identity literature. Steps towards the fulfillment of the Association's purpose, "to disseminate the knowledge of the fact that the Anglo-Saxons are now identified with the Lost Tribes of the House of Israel" were clearly being taken.

The Association continued its attempt to attract members which might earn it recognition and respect. Anglican and dissenting clergy as well as local politicians not only attended the lectures but often occupied the chair at the event. Their introductions were almost always flattering and they nearly unanimously recognized the "importance of the subject" in light of contemporary affairs, particularly the expansion of the empire. No doubt their support induced many to look further into the idea. These efforts were successful, however, only in part. The increasing numbers of clergy, military officers, and middle-class professionals which occupied either a council seat or vice-presidency

did attract the attention which the Association craved. However, they soon learned that recognition did not always lead to respect.

Soon after the Association's Second Annual Meeting a twenty page article appeared in the *Church Quarterly Review* describing the movement as "one of the most remarkable of the minor currents of contemporary thought." The author recognized its widespread appeal as well as the fact that the executive of its association "is made up by officers of both services, and of a few, only a few, stray clergy in London and elsewhere." Despite these congenial nods, the article's aim was to disprove the idea, convince the public of its dangers, and humiliate its adherents.[94] Likewise the choice of Viscount Folkestone as the first President attracted some notice. In early 1882, the *Freeman,* an organ of the English Baptist Denomination, ran an article on British-Israelism. "The Metropolitan Anglo-Israel Association, an association of amiable but somewhat weak-minded eccentrics, who believe in the Identity of the British nation with the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel," it reported, "has been fortunate enough to secure an aristocratic president in the person of Lord Folkestone, M.P." The importance of such a supporter, it admitted rather condescendingly, was immense:

> from a social point of view he is decidedly the biggest catch they have made. They certainly have one Colonial Bishop [J. H. Titcomb], and any number of Colonels and Major Generals; but a Colonial Bishop, like dead Caesar, finds 'none so poor to do him reverence,' and the Colonels and Major-Generals have so often shown a weakness for the silliest religious movements, that they are a disadvantage rather than an advantage to any cause. A lord, however, is a different thing altogether; even

[94]"Anglo-Israelism," *The Church Quarterly Review* 147 (July 1880): 319.

> when he is not useful, he is always ornamental, and I wish the Anglo-Israelites joy of Lord Folkestone.[95]

At about the same time, articles were run in *The Echo* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* recognizing the membership of both Lord Folkestone and Major-General Edwyn Sherard Burnaby, M.P., in the Metropolitan Association. While neither article was very cordial, they did at least admit that "their faith is rapidly spreading" and that "its movements may be worth watching by those who care to study irregular phases of public opinion."[96] Nevertheless, implicit in these articles was an attitude of disbelief which *The Saturday Review* explicitly revealed. "It might be supposed, and we must confess that we had long been of the opinion ourselves, that the Anglo-Israelite craze is too absurd to require or even admits of serious refutation," it begins. Yet bemusedly it concedes that, "without endorsing Carlyle's uncomplimentary estimate of our countrymen as 'mostly fools,' we are constrained to acknowledge that there does seem to be a surprisingly considerable fraction of them to whom this particular form of folly has commended itself."[97] Though the Association achieved a good deal of the recognition which it sought, the respect it hoped for remained largely elusive.

The strength and influence of the Metropolitan Association should not be overstated. Its centralizing authority was, in fact, extremely limited since it had no

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[95]*The Freeman* (April 1882), reprinted in, *Israel's Hope and Destiny* 3 (May 1882): 143.

[96]*The Echo* (London), 19 May 1882; *Pall Mall Gazette* (London) April 1882; re-printed in *Israel's Hope and Destiny* 3 (May 1882): 141-2.

[97]"Anglo-Israelism," *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art* 56 (October 20 1883): 502.

official authority over the local societies. Affiliation with it was voluntary, though the benefits were very real. Representation at the annual conferences, application for lecture funds and authorized lecturers, as well as access to a network of like societies served everyone's best interests. It was not however (at least officially), a doctrine-setting body. As explained earlier, British-Israelism was at best doctrinally permissive, at worst, confused. Apart from major points, great latitude was allowed on specific areas of both the Identity and its consequences. What control over doctrine did exist was exerted, with one significant exception, very informally. The homogenization of doctrine, which was one of the major reasons Philo-Israel had pushed for organization in the first place, was carried out mostly by means of the explicit and implicit endorsement of views. The pages of *The Banner of Israel, The Anglo-Israel Almanack* (both edited by Philo-Israel), and later the *Messenger,* as well as the positions taken by the Association's authorized lecturers and the papers given at its meetings and annual conferences, defined the Identity's position on many points. The homogenization process was never complete, nor was it designed to be so. The major doctrinal points, however, needed to be defined and when significant danger was posed to them the Association did have the means and influence to come to their protection.

It was the old controversy surrounding the Teutonic school that instigated the only real flexing of the Association's muscles. From its founding, the Metropolitan Association was decidedly Britain-as-Israel in orientation. Hine's lecturing and writing during the 1870s had made this interpretation dominant throughout the country. Articles printed in the *Banner,* the *Almanack*, and the *Messenger* all reflected this view. Book

reviews of Teutonic works appeared in the journals explaining where the author had gone wrong in his or her interpretation. Many of the members from the old Anglo-Ephraim Association joined the Metropolitan or affiliated associations but their views on the Teutonic idea were downplayed. Yet a small vocal Teutonic element remained. Perhaps the most devoted Teutonist was the Rev. Robert Douglas. In 1886 Douglas published the first of several books, *Ephraim-England: The XIXth Century Revelation of the Fruits of History*, from a Teutonist angle.[98] Douglas, believing that the Metropolitan British-Israel Association was guilty of a number of gross errors in its message, harkened back to the teachings of John Wilson regarding the Israelitish descent of all the Protestant nations of Europe.[99] "The error of locating all the ten tribes in the British Isles is so obvious," he concluded, "on rational and historical grounds, as to make it necessary to extend their habitation to other lands peopled by kindred races. . . . We venture to invite our Anglo-Israel friends to reconsider their position."[100] Douglas considered it a "most pernicious and radical heresy" to apply to any one people or race, "simply considered as such," all the promises made to Israel to the exclusion of kindred Protestant nations.[101] Though the

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[98]Douglas also published *Darkest Britain's Epiphany* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1891); *God and Greater Britain* (1899); *A British-Ephraim Catechism* (1911); and edited *The Two Witnesses: A Monthly Magazine Supplying Proofs and Illustrations From Scripture and History that The British Nation Represents Elect Israel of Ephraim*, vols. 1-4 (1887-1891); *Bible Light on Bible Israel*, vol. 1 (1892), all advocating the Teutonist point of view.

[99]These mistakes are outlined in, *God and Greater Britain*, 9-15.

[100]Ibid., 12-13.

[101]Robert Douglas, M.A., ed., *The Two Witnesses* 3 (January 1890): 66.

narrow racial focus of the Britain-as-Israel school concerned him, he was not above requiring "kinship" on the part of Northern European nations as the criterion for their claim to Israelitish descent.[102]

A move to gloss over these differences and present to the world a united front of Identity believers was the establishment, in the mid-1880s, of the British-Israel Conference Association. The Conference Association's purpose was to bring together all British-Israelites by ignoring the controversial issues: "it was the earnest wish of the promoters of the scheme that there should be no exclusiveness, but that Anglo-Israelites of all shades of opinion should meet on a common platform, from which all subjects upon which they were at variance should be excluded." Both Britain-as-Israel adherents and Teutonists, including Douglas, served as its directors. All were barred, however, from encouraging one view over the other. This idea was explicitly set down in Rule 10 of the Conference Association, "That in order to present a united platform, all matters of a controversial character among British Israelites shall be absolutely excluded from papers read or speeches given at the public meetings of the different Conferences."[103] Ignoring the problem, however, did not make it disappear.

In 1889 Douglas and several other Teutonists decided to bring the Britain-as-Israel-dominated movement closer to their side. An absence of officers at the Edinburgh Conference of that year gave Douglas his chance. Exerting great influence over the few officers present, he had himself elected Secretary of the Conference Association and he

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[102]Ibid., 1 (December 1887): 100-101.

[103]"British-Israel Conference Association," *The Messenger* 4 (October 1889): 357-8.

instructed his fellow Teutonist, Rev. Herbert Marriott, to introduce a number of resolutions essentially endorsing the Teutonist viewpoint. The overwhelming Teutonist presence at that Conference ensured their passage. When word of this 'coup' reached the other officers, the influence of the Metropolitan Association was called in to action. Douglas was removed as Secretary, Marriott was dismissed as Treasurer, and legal action was taken to procure the Conference Association's record books and documents from them. The Conference Association and the Metropolitan Association were amalgamated under the new name, the British-Israel Association (Metropolitan, Provincial, and Colonial). This 'amalgamation' was essentially the disbanding of the Conference Association. The new British-Israel Association was devoted to the Britain-as-Israel idea and was run by virtually the same rules and people as the Metropolitan Association had been.[104] Teutonist views were excluded or underplayed. Douglas remained defiant and continued to publish books, edit journals, and form organizations devoted to the Teutonic idea. His associations, the Christian-Israel Association (c.1890) and the British-Ephraim Church Mission (c.1898), attracted a fair number of members from the British-Israel Association, including Thomas Myles Sandys, M.P. and Sir Arthur Cotton, K.C.S.I., but the actions taken by the Metropolitan Association effectively limited the strength and spread of his message. The bitterness, however, as seen in the often vituperative pages of Douglas' *Bible Light on Bible Israel*, remained.

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[104]Each side reported this conflict in their respective journals. While the interpretations of guilt differ, the basic facts of the incident are found in both accounts. See ibid.; also *The Two Witnesses* 3 (January 1890): 65-66.

Apart from this one rather acrimonious and embarrassing incident, slow but steady progress characterized the organizational history of the movement. The number of socially important people on its rolls continued to increase. During the 1880s and 1890s the local groups and affiliated societies throughout the country and empire expanded from twenty-seven to approximately sixty. Established in such places Belfast, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Pietermaritzburgh, South Africa, and Sydney, these groups took the Identity to an ever expanding audience. Though money was never plentiful, the Association collected enough from subscriptions, donations, and the legacies from deceased members to supply funds for lectures, purchase literature for distribution, and buy a caravan to be used by lecturers for outdoor rallies during the summer months. Interest in the Identity was continuing to grow. The sale of books, pamphlets and journals remained strong. The demand for and attendance at lectures both within the country and throughout the empire was actually increasing. All this, however, did not translate into increased membership, which remained fairly stagnant until the time of the First World War. The experience of most local groups mirrored that of the Glasgow Israel Identification Association. While its message appealed to many, its membership remained low. Even *The Scottish Pulpit* recognized that, "although not strong in members, the organization can count on at least a thousand sympathisers in the city."[105] The paper, like the Association, was not in the position to explain this discrepancy. In fact, the reporter seemed all the more perplexed at the low membership since "the evidence in possession of the Association that the British people--the Anglo-Saxon race--

[105]*The Scottish Pulpit* (Glasgow), 2 March 1892.

are in the language of Scripture 'the remnant of Israel' is overwhelming . . . [and] the members of the Glasgow Association are intelligent and are always prepared to give a reason for the faith that is in them."

The problem of low membership was not limited to associations outside London. The official rolls of the British-Israel Association listed only between two and five hundred members from 1894 to 1914. Though this did not include members of local associations, even the directors of the Association bemoaned this total as terribly low. Low membership both bemused and dismayed the leaders of the movement. Officers put the best spin on this fact as they could. In 1894 the General Secretary, Rev. Frederick Aston, reported at the end of a particularly dismal membership year that "we have members in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Honolulu, and other parts of the world, but 250 [the number of members] represents only one-thousandth part of those who may be reckoned believers in this our country."[106] Yet the lack of numbers and funds hurt both the effectiveness and the image of the movement. By 1908 the problems associated with low membership had become too pronounced to ignore. If membership could not be increased then the effects of low numbers had to be offset as best as possible. "It is of utmost importance," the Secretary of the Association instructed the members, "to point out to the Press--when a copy of our annual report and list of subscribers is asked for--that our Association does not consist of a mere 300 or 400 members who *alone* represent British-Israel Truth, but that this Truth is believed in,

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[106]Frederick Aston, General Secretary, "The British-Israel Association" *The Covenant People* 1 (December 1894): 216.

upheld and advocated by thousands throughout our land. It is very difficult to make this clear to the Press, and, in consequence, that cause has to suffer, as they will not recognise a small organisation."[107] The attempt to gain new members, however, was never very organized. Though members were encouraged to enroll others, there were never any membership drives nor many attempts to make membership seem advantageous to believers. By 1900 membership dues to the Association were 7 shillings. While this entitled members to a year's subscription to *The Covenant People,* there were plenty of other outlets of information and Identity literature outside the Association's official journal. Moreover, *The Covenant People* was available at newsstands so membership was not even necessary to receive it. Until the end of World War I the movement's organizational structures did little to encourage membership. Although their message seemed glorious, their mission and recruitment methods remained at best ill-defined and membership lagged as a result.

**The Rise of the British-Israel World Federation**

The Protestant British Israel League, founded in 1910 by the popular British-Israel lecturer Augusta Cook, proved that membership drives for the Identity cause could work. The success of her new organization was the outgrowth of two functional aspects which the British-Israel Association did not have. First, Cook defined more clearly the goals of her association. She made clear that hers was not a splinter group. Its purpose, as outlined in a declaration in the first issue of its journal, was:

> solely and simply to take a Forward Step. The position now of British-Israel Truth is, we feel, impregnable--Holy Writ in History and Prophecy--the investigations in

[107]"Annual Report" *The Covenant People* 15 (August 1908): 69.

> Secular History, especially in the line of our Race--may be accepted in the main as establishing the Identity as a Fact. On this Basis we feel that we may "Go Forward" to teach further details of the great importance as to Israel under the New Covenant in Christ.[108]

Existing Associations had concentrated, she concluded, on *proving* the identity between Britain and Israel. Cook believed that this message, while in itself valuable, lacked incentives towards organizing. Once a person was convinced of the "truth" of the Identity, the Association's stated aim had been achieved. At this point its purpose became less clear. Cook's new League concentrated not on the proof of the Identity but on its consequences. Embracing a number of moral and imperial issues, Cook gave a direction and a long-term purpose to her organization. Secondly, the structure of the League contributed to its success in recruiting subscriptions and donations. The League was centrally controlled, exerting great authority over its local chapters. All members were included in its membership tallies (thus giving the appearance of momentous growth) and were kept in contact through the central League's writings alone. In the quarterly journal, Cook could and did make urgent direct pleas for membership and money. Within the first few months more than seven hundred subscriptions were received, and by the second year this total had reached more than a thousand. Membership forms were inserted in all types of British-Israel literature and on them the directors of the League explained to the readers how important their membership was to the operation of the League. Through persistent appeals, the Protestant B-I League was able to convince many to contribute to the British-Israel cause who had not done so

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[108]"To All Believers in British-Israel Truth, and Especially to Those of the Protestant Faith," *Quarterly Notes of the Protestant British-Israel League* 1 (January 1911): 1.

before. Since it was not an antagonistic group, many of its members also probably belonged to the British-Israel Association. Nevertheless, it had persuaded more than twice the number of people to contribute money to the cause. While the British-Israel Association was quite successful in the propagation of the Identity, the experience of the Protestant British-Israel League highlighted the Association's deficiencies in procuring members. It simply did not have the necessary mechanisms, the organizational authority, or even a clearly defined program to make significant progress in its appeals for membership. It became increasingly apparent that a new structure was necessary.

Concrete measures designed for the development of a more centralized organizational structure were proposed as early as 1906. In April of that year, the General Secretary of the British-Israel Association submitted for consideration its Agenda for the national Conference of believers, to be held in London on May 3rd and 4th. The first point of the Agenda suggested the following resolution be considered by all delegates at the Conference-- "That all such Associations should be united in some form with a view to giving cohesion to the Cause." The Agenda suggested that all local associations unite tightly with the British-Israel Association and that the nation be divided into a number of Districts each with its own council. These councils would be responsible for local activity while each would also send a representative to a General Council responsible for national cohesion of the cause. Local autonomy would remain largely intact and yet the substantial disunity which had prevailed would hopefully be mitigated. "This union of Associations," the Agenda predicted, "could not fail to have great effect in the dissemination of British-Israel Truth, and prove to the world that what have hitherto been

separate, and more or less disjointed, actions on the part of local Associations, had become a combined and united Institution."[109] When the delegates met in May, however, they arrived at a different conclusion. There was some agreement that local delegates should gather to discuss issues concerning the belief and should look upon the London association as the *central* one, but as to a tighter association, delegate spokesman Rev. John I. Jones reported that, "I do not think [it] is practicable at present. The times are not ripe for the arrangement."[110] The next year the delegates determined that the time had still not arrived and a proposal for federation was again considered to be "premature". For the next dozen years, despite the obvious successes of the tightly organized Protestant British-Israel League, the Identity organizations throughout the country remained only loosely allied.

The successful creation of a central Federation of British-Israel believers emerged in the context of the First World War. The events of the war brought an increased recognition and interest to the British-Israel cause. During the war, the British-Israel Association not only continued but expanded its activities. Membership began to increase more rapidly, and the movement itself reached a higher profile. Three weeks before the outbreak of war, the Earl of Dysart, an avid British-Israelite, held a garden party at his residence at Ham House, west of London. The High Commissioner of Canada, the Lieutenant Governor of Victoria, Earl Grey, General Sir Bevan and Lady

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[109]S. J. Carlton, General Secretary, "Agenda"; printed in "Conference and Affiliation," *Banner of Israel* 30 (11 April 1906): 159.

[110]"British-Israel Association: Conference at Exeter Hall, London," *Banner of Israel* 30 (23 May 1906): 223.

Edwards, Lord and Lady Sydenham, and Lord and Lady Leamington headed a guest list which included aristocracy and dignitaries from across the empire. Also present at the party were several leaders of the British-Israel cause. Lord Dysart had invited them for the express purpose of presenting the Identity to this influential gathering.[111] After the reception, the guests were escorted to a marquee set on the lawns. At a meeting presided over by Thomas MacKenzie the High Commissioner for New Zealand, three British-Israel leaders made their case. Mr. Herbert Garrison took the guests around the empire, and told them of its marvelous, even miraculous, nature; Colonel Gosset and Douglas Onslow presented the evidence for the Identity, both scriptural and historical. Lord Dysart and Major-General Beresford both attested to their belief in the cause and many of those present approached the speakers for copies of their presentations. Most likely many of those attending found the presentations at best curious, but the chance to address such a distinguished convocation brought a new level of dignity to the cause.[112]

Once the war began, the British-Israel Association lent its efforts to the fight. After all, if this were not Armageddon (it was too soon to be sure) then at the very least it must be the battle which was to precede it.[113] God had now called upon Israel to uphold

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[111]"An Imperial Garden Party," *Banner of Israel* 38 (July 29, 1914): 332; also *Times* (London), 16 July 1914.

[112]*Covenant People* 21 (August 1914): 97-99.

[113]Henry D. Houghton, *Shall We Win the War and Why? A Message of Cheer to the Nation*. 2d ed., 15th Thousand. (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1916); Augusta Cook, *Is It Armageddon? The Present War in Light of Prophecy*. 7th ed. 22 Thousand (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1918); Renton Gibbs, *Is this War The Work of the Devil?* 2nd. ed. (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1918); Colonel A. O. Green, F.R.C.I., *The War in*

righteousness in the face of the forces of evil. Members were encouraged to join the armed forces. Those who served were listed in the *Covenant People* under a special section entitled "The Roll of Honour." The British-Israel Caravan, which had for years past held open-air meetings around the London area, now not only spoke to its assemblies about the Identity but also recruited the young men present into His Majesty's forces. In 1915, the Van signed up 5,408 men for service in the Army or Navy.[114] The *Anglo-Israel Almanack for the Year 1915* detailed the training which the soldiers received and profiled the leaders of the forces including the late General Lord Roberts, who had expressed interest in the Identity and whose brother was an active British-Israelite.[115] The war was interpreted along Biblical lines: British setbacks signifying Israel's punishment, British victories, Israel's grace.

During the war, interest in the Identity increased markedly. British-Israelites had long predicted that there would be a collision between the English and Germans, whom many considered to be descendants of Assyria. A few years before the war, the German Dr. Swaner, editor of the newspaper *Der Volkserzieher*, stated that, "it will not be surprising to find that England is found to be identified with Israel, and that Germany is a mixture of the Philistines, Assyrians, and Romans--traditional enemies of Israel."[116] This

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*Prophecy: A Lecture Delivered in Central Hall, Camberley, on April 3rd, 1918* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1918).

[114]For details on the Caravan's work see *The Covenant People* 22 (June 1916): Appendix.

[115]*Anglo Israel Almanack for the Year 1915* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1914).

[116]Quoted in "Prophecy and Diplomacy," *The Truth* (Mizpah, Jerusalem), 18 October 1910.

ethnological makeup, he continued, explained the animosity between the Germans and Anglo-Saxons. When hostilities did break out, it was not only believers in the Identity who placed a Biblical spin on the Great War. Large numbers of clergy who had no connection to the British-Israel movement interpreted the war as a Divine battle between good (Britain) and evil (Germany).[117] At the start of the War, the Rev. Wyndham Earee, Rector of Angersleigh, preached a sermon in which he professed, "if Great Britain is, as we believe, God's chosen Nation to be the vanguard of Christian civilisation;--if to her is given the destiny of making the Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of Christ, than we as a people must not hesitate to further that cause by whatever means God shall require us to act."[118] Around the country and at the highest levels of the church, the British were told that they were "a people with a definite part to play in God's eternal purpose for the world. Not merely in the present conflict, but for some generations we have been recognised throughout the world as the champions of righteousness, the upholders of justice, the defenders of the oppressed."[119] These were, British-Israelites were quick to point out, the peculiar characteristics of Israel. In a speech to the Aldwych Club in October 1917, Winston Churchill explained that the Germans' resumption of submarine warfare was a desperate response to the inevitable victory of Great Britain.

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[117]A. J. Hoover, *God, Germany, and Britain in the Great War: A Study in Clerical Nationalism* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 67-74.

[118]"A Call to Arms: Notes of a Sermon Preached in Upcott Parish Church, Tauton, on Aug. 16th 1914" by Rev. Wyndham Earee, Rector of Angersleigh; reprinted in *The Covenant People* 21 (September 1914): 106.

[119]Extract from Bishop of Chelmsford, "Church's Duty to the State" given at the Islington Clerical Meeting on *Christianity and the War, 1915.*

"They knew where the vital point in the world struggle was. . . . They knew that in this island there reside the forces which were appointed from the dawn of history to frustrate that great evil and shield the world from its unmeasured consequences."[120] Generally, then, there was an increased awareness of the possible Divine plan behind the war. Stories such as those of the angels at Mons only increased the sense that God was playing a part in the war and playing on Britain's side.[121] Within this context, British-Israelism appeared to hold many of the answers.

Beyond this sense of choseness, however, there was a deeper reason for this increased interest in British-Israelism. By late 1917, the war was in very real ways fulfilling the most basic prophecies of the movement. From its inception, the movement had predicted that the British, as the ten tribes, would come into possession of the Holy Land. Once there, they would set up a new kingdom and bring back with them the other two tribes, the Jews. Moreover, according to prophetic exegeses written as early as 1886,

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[120]"Mr. Churchill on the War. The Acutest Phase. Meeting the U-Boat Menace," *Times* (London), 4 October 1917. In the same speech Churchill referred to the war as 'Armageddon'.

[121]At the battle of Mons (August, 1914), many stories were told of visions being seen by soldiers of warriors astride white stallions coming from the heavens. The German forces which had been cutting through the British lines, the stories continued, were suddenly and inexplicably struck down. These stories were widely repeated and commented upon in the both the secular and religious press. See "Phantom Armies Seen in France," *North American Review* 202 (August 1915): 207-12; "The Miracle of Mons," *Independent* (New York) 83 (September 20 1915): 381-2; "On the Supernatural Element in History as Seen in Two Recent Occurrences," *Contemporary Review* 110 (August 1916): 188-98; Handley Dunhelm, "Retreat at Mons," *Spectator* 121 (19 October 1918): 420. The story is analyzed in Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 115-16.

the repossession of the Holy Land would take place in or about 1917.[122] In 1917, the Balfour Declaration promised that the British Government would reestablish the Jews in the Holy Land. Furthermore, also in that year General Edmund Allenby made increasing advances in the Middle East and on December 11, he formally took possession of Jerusalem, the capital of the Kingdom of Judah.[123] Could it be, British-Israelites asked eagerly, that this was all coincidence? These events, without a doubt, provoked many to look into their case. The *Daily Chronicle*, certainly not a British-Israel organ, reported that "the victories of General Allenby in Palestine have given a new interest to what is called 'British Israelism.' The late Queen Victoria was profoundly impressed by some of these ideas and studied a chart which set out to prove that we were the direct inheritors of the Israelite tradition."[124] Later that week, a prominent religious newspaper explained that,

> the ingenious theories of British-Israelism, even though they beg the question at many points, certainly seem to be finding wider acceptance as the war goes on, and recent events in Palestine have decidedly quickened the interest of many good folk in these views. Last Monday, at a British-Israel meeting in the Central Hall Buildings at Westminster, the hall--not, indeed, the large hall, but a hall of very considerable size--was packed to overflowing, and scores of people stood for an hour an a half

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[122]Henry Grattan Guinness, *Light for the Last Days: A Study Historic and Prophetic* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1886), 342-46; Herbert Aldersmith, *The Fulness of Nations; or, the ABC of the Promises Given to the House of Israel Considered In the Relation to the Second Advent*. 2d ed. (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1898), preface; idem, Gog--The Final Gentile Power (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1915), 34.

[123]Allenby's name, British-Israelites explained, was pronounced by the Arabs of Palestine "Allah-nebi" or "the Prophet of God." See *The Covenant People* 25 (April 1919): 399.

[124]*Daily Chronicle* (London), 11 November 1917.

> while a lady [Augusta Cook] explained the war and its issues from a British-Israel point of view and made everything fit like a mosaic.[125]

The war had, by all accounts, induced the British to look further into the idea of themselves as God's chosen people. So much was this the case that the Archbishop of Canterbury felt it necessary to speak to the issue in his sermon at London's St. Paul's Cathedral on the anniversary of the beginning of the war, August 4, 1917. Such ideas were unfounded, he told the congregation, "we have no right to stand where the Old Testament sets the chosen people. 'The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth.' To claim these words or apply them to ourselves as a people might be the very arrogance which we denounce elsewhere, the presumptuousness which we are warned to eschew."[126]

The leaders of the British-Israel movement understood that if they were to take advantage of this increasing interest in the cause, then a more efficient and well-run organization needed to be put in place. The idea of the British-Israel World Federation was born. The Federation was essentially the brain-child of Herbert Garrison. Garrison had much experience with organizing mass movements. During the war, the War Office and Home Office employed him as "special lecturer" to coordinate and preside over patriotic lectures and rallies held around the city of London including Hyde Park and the Albert Hall. His lectures for the War Office, numbering over 600, were also geared

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[125]"Mr. Dinsdale Young--A British-Israelite?" *Christian World* (London), 15 November 1917.

[126]Quoted in "Are We the Chosen People--A Letter by Lord Dysart." *Church Family Newspaper* (London), 14 March 1918.

towards raising money and recruits. He had been involved in patriotic and religious organizing and speaking since 1876 at the age of eighteen and thus his experience gave him the background for organizing mass-movements.[127] Garrison, in the words of George R. Parkin, was "one of the finest patriots in the country. He has for many years been doing a work of great national value and importance."[128] Having been a believer in the Identity for many years Garrison had delivered numerous lectures on the subject. Though devoted to the cause, he was struck by the mismanagement of its membership. The loose affiliation between the central British-Israel Association and local groups bred disunity. What was needed was a tighter federation. Without stepping on the basic autonomy of local organizations, it was necessary to bind them closer together and run the dissemination of the cause itself from its London headquarters. Responding to the increased interest towards the end of the war, Garrison began to formulate the structure of the Federation. It would be a centralizing and umbrella organization. Unlike the British-Israel Association, the local branches were to be extensions of the Federation, rather than simply independent groups with affiliation. Finances, publications, and lectures would be organized and controlled from the London headquarters. A more centrally-controlled movement, Garrison believed, would be more efficient in the spread of the message, more visible to society at large, and better able to procure membership from those interested in

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[127]For more on Garrison see "Obituary--Mr. H. Garrison," *Times* (London), 26 July 1935.

[128]Quoted in W. T. F. Jarrold, *Our Great Heritage With Its Responsibilities* (London: Covenant Publishing Co., 1927), xvi.

the Identity.[129] His arguments, and the idea of the Federation, seem to have appealed to most British-Israelites and in 1919 the British-Israel World Federation became a reality.

Garrison also knew the importance of securing high-profile patrons for the new Federation and concentrated his energies towards this goal. His efforts did not go unrewarded. The most important patron was without a doubt Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, who had been long interested in the Identity through the influence of the Countess of Radnor. His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, the Hon. Lord Gisborough, the Bishop of the Falkland Islands, and the Earl of Meath, among others, all bestowed their patronage on the new organization.[130] All of these had been aware of and associated with the Identity for some time. Reginald Brabazon, the Earl of Meath, wrote extensively in support of the empire, often with religious overtones.[131] He had been the founder of Empire Day designed to increase awareness among the youth throughout Greater Britain concerning the importance and obligations of the empire. It is not surprising then that he would be sympathetic to a movement which placed such

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[129]Garrison and other formulators of the Federation, especially the Rev. George Herbert Lancaster, kept Identity believers informed about the objects, aims, and progress of the Federation's genesis through articles in the *Banner of Israel* during the last months of 1918 and the first six months of 1919.

[130]*Report of the British-Israel World Federation Congress, July 5-10, 1920*, 291.

[131]See Meath, et al., *Our Empire, Past and Present*, 2 vols. (1901, 1905); Meath, *Memories of the Twentieth Century* (London: John Murray, 1924); chaps. 2 & 3.

emphasis on Imperial majesty. Though he was not able to attend the inaugural meeting of the Federation, he did send a letter expressing his sympathy to the cause.[132]

On July 3 and 4, 1919, the inaugural meeting of the British Israel World Federation was held in Caxton Hall. Princess Alice was the guest of honor at the meeting which launched the new organization. The members elected Major-General C.A. Hadfield as the Federation's first President, while Herbert Garrison took the office of Secretary-General (responsible for most organizational duties). The *Times* and other papers gave notice of the meeting, and at its conclusion a general proclamation was made encouraging all local groups to amalgamate with the Federation.[133] Its motto, "Together in Unity" expressed the underlying idea of the Federation which described itself as: "A Federation of British-Israel Councils, Associations and Believers throughout the British Empire, the United States of America and elsewhere." Its objects were simple and all had one aim, to promulgate the belief in the identity of the British race as Israel.[134] The last one, object 5-- "To co-ordinate and thus strengthen the work of all British-Israel or Anglo-Israel

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[132]Rev. George Herbert Lancaster. "British-Israel World Federation--A New Patron," *Banner of Israel* 43 (2 July 1919): 237.

[133]*Times* (London), 4 July 1919.

[134]The "Objects" of the Federation were as follows: 1.-- "To make known to the sons of men God's mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His Kingdom (Psalm cxlv. 12)"; 2.--To promulgate the belief that the peoples of the British or Saxon race within the British Isles and their offspring beyond the Seas, including the United States of America, are of the stock of Israel; 3.--To establish as a fact that the said belief is supported and confirmed by the Holy Scriptures (and in particular by the prophetical portions thereof) and by historical events; 4.--To demonstrate to the peoples aforesaid the privileges and responsibilities attaching to them by reason of their said descent. *Report of the British-Israel World Federation Congress, 1920,* 294.

Associations and councils throughout the World," exposed the real reason for the Federation's birth.

The British-Israel World Federation brought the movement to a higher plane of organization. Most local groups amalgamated with the Federation almost immediately. Those throughout the empire soon followed suit. The British-Israel Association formally approved the proposal to amalgamate with the Federation on June 10, 1920.[135] At the time of its first Congress, in July 1920, the Federation could claim nearly ninety local branches throughout the world. Membership had reached into the several thousands, and the rolls of Patrons and Vice-Patrons had continued to grow.[136] Organizationally, the inter-war period, under the guidance of the World Federation, was the heyday of the movement. It is not the purpose of this dissertation, however, to chart the organizational history of the movement past the Federation's birth. Rather, this study attempts to establish the development and context of an idea, which after 1920 changed very little. The World Federation, to this day, carries on its work from its London headquarters. Its branches and membership have greatly decreased since the decolonization process following the second World War. At last count, total members to the Federation stood at about 700 worldwide with only about a half dozen branches.[137] Nevertheless, the organizational structure of the movement has not greatly changed since the Federation's inception.

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[135]*The Covenant People* 27 (July 1920): 17-23.

[136]*Report of the British-Israel-World Federation Congress, 1920,* iv.

[137]Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right,* 282n.

**Conclusion**

Assessing the importance of the organizational history of the theory remains difficult. The problems arise primarily from the fact that until the World Federation concentrated the movement's energies into procuring members, organized British-Israel societies often struggled for survival. The focus, then, seems to be better placed not on the organized form of the theory but on the popular acceptance of it, even if (as was often the case) such acceptance did not inspire one to join an official body. There is a significant amount of truth in this. When, in 1899, the Rev. John Idrisyn Jones went on his empire-wide lecture tour he attracted a good deal of attention. "The lectures of this distinguished advocate of the Anglo-Israel view of the origin of the British race," the *Australian Christian World* reported, "have aroused a wide amount of interest in religious circles throughout Australia." However, it went on to admit, many "can see no mortal use in it, even if by some strange chance it should be true."[138] Even some of the Identity's most devoted believers conceded that for many years they could not "see the force of it."[139] As indicated in chapter two, the appeal which the theory made to racial and imperial pride made it rather easily accepted by a good number of people. The corollary to this, however, was, most likely, that it was lightly accepted as well. Accepting a glorious racial heritage was easy, devoting time and money to it, especially since it had no defined political or social program, was far less attractive. For a study such as this, though, the fact that the Isra-

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[138]*Australian Christian World* (Brisbane), 9 June 1899.

[139]Jarrold, *Our Great Heritage*, xvii-xviii.

elitish origin of the Anglo-Saxon was seriously considered by a significant portion of the population retains paramount importance. The organizational deficiencies of such a proposition do not greatly detract from it.

To completely dismiss the associations, however, would be a mistake. The formation and eventual union of British-Israel advocacy groups had a marked effect on the history of the theory as a whole. At first glance, their creation indicates that the theory did possess enough interest and spur enough fervor (despite its limitations) to encourage people to seek others who shared their beliefs and to form organized societies for their propagation. More importantly, despite the lack of formal controls until 1919, the British-Israel Association's use of journals, official lecturers, and publishing houses, allowed it to keep the *central* points of the message clear and uniform.[140] Such general uniformity not only made complete federation possible, but also contributed to the viability and moderation of the Identity. From the days of Edward Hine caution had been urged against "gratuitous hypotheses" and "fanciful identifications."[141] Associations, with their ability to limit and shape the message by means of controlling its dissemination, kept these to a minimum. Michael Barkun has recently argued that the lack of a centralizing force in the American spread of the Identity message contributed to its many mutations and to the introduction of hateful, paranoid, and anti-Semitic doctrines.[142] The British-

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[140]As explained before, great latitude was allowed in the minor points as long as they did not change the central hypotheses concerning the racial and imperial consequences of the Identity.

[141]Smith, *The Identity of Israel with the English and Kindred Races*, 7.

[142]Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right*, 244-47.

Israel World Federation and its predecessors successfully prevented this from happening in Great Britain, and to this day no Identity group in Britain professes these ideas. It would be impossible to understand the importance of the theory by looking solely at its organizational history. Its central proposition, and the racial and imperial assumptions which underlay it, had greater impact than any local or central group. Nevertheless, the organizations helped keep the Identity message on track. They also supplied the funds and support needed to both collect the evidence required to convince the race of its glorious heritage and to coordinate and disseminate the message. The important functions performed by Identity associations, then, duly warrant the attention of this chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR
## FAITH CONFIRMED BY SCIENCE: SECULAR EVIDENCE

The final three chapters of this study constitute an intellectual assessment of British-Israelism. What is under investigation here is the theory's use of and relationship to contemporary historical, racial, scriptural and imperial thought, not the validity of their conclusions. British-Israelites did not divorce themselves from mainstream assumptions about the Anglo-Saxon race. The theory, they recognized, could not stand up under any rational investigation if it attempted to flout what scholars, scientists, and the general public alike, considered to be either factual or at least reasonable. British-Israelism did not attempt to counter the broader historical, scientific, or religious assumptions of the imperial age; rather it tried to extend them. These chapters will assess British-Israelism's dependence upon and use of contemporary secular scholarship. By doing so, it is hoped that the racial identity imparted by British-Israelism will appear to be more mainstream than a simple discussion of the theory's tenets might suggest. British-Israelism's importance, it will be remembered, emanates from the fact that it elucidates a larger imperial and racial mind-set. In order to represent this broader world-view, the theory had to work from the same underlying suppositions. The theory's remarkable ability to do so both explains its success and illuminates much of the nature of scientific inquiry, religious opinion, and imperial assumptions during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. British-Israelism's relationship to each of these realms of thought will be examined in turn.

The present chapter focuses upon the theory's scientific foundations. The great forces of nineteenth-century scholarship, British-Israelites believed, could be brought to bear on the early history of the Anglo-Saxon people and would, without a doubt, disclose their privileged origin. Secular history, linguistics, and what was termed "ethnology" (being a combination of biological and cultural indications of common racial origin), among others, were all ransacked for any piece of evidence which might bolster the Identity's claims. The fundamental religious nature of the movement meant that the scriptural evidence was always considered paramount, yet Scripture alone was insufficient to confirm the truth of the Israel in Britain. As a whole, British-Israelites agreed that to prove their descent they had to engage in two lines of argument, "First--The Scriptural. Second--The Historical, Philological, and Ethnological."[1] The secular 'sciences' might be brought in to support the conclusions drawn from Scripture, "our final appeal, however, is the Word of God, which we are convinced must square with all true science."[2] Nevertheless, the presentation of scientific evidence (including secular history) occupied the time of many British-Israel leaders. The modern world, with its emphasis on empirically provable knowledge, demanded no less if the Identity were ever to be accepted by the British people as a whole.

Secular evidence had played an important role in the modern Identity from its inception. John Wilson, it will be remembered, first developed the theory in the course of his

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[1]Caroline Pearse, *Japhetic or Semitic: Which Are We?* (London: Robert Banks, [1880]), 3.

[2]M. Graham Coltart, "Foreword," *The Northern British-Israel Review* 1 (January 1911): 5.

phrenological explorations. In the course of his many writings on the subject Wilson also employed history, linguistics, and ethnology. Dr. George Moore relied on philology and archaeology, among other disciplines, to interconnect the two branches of the Saxon race (East and West) and these to the Israelites. The Rev. Glover explored the ancient writings, folk-lore and legends of Ireland to reconstruct the history of the line of Judah, while Piazzi Smyth's works brought into the Identity movement not only the mathematical science of metrology (the study of measurements) but an eminent scientist as well. All of these authors contributed this secular evidence to the Identity before the belief became an organized movement in the 1870s. This scientific background helped legitimatize the efforts to connect the two peoples. Identity writers, Campbell charged, took hold "eagerly at any passing straw that presents a semblance of scientific color, to keep [the] theory afloat before the eyes of reasoning men."[3] It is almost certain, in fact, that the Identity would not have incited as much interest as it eventually did if it had been either lacking in secular evidence or completely contradictory to all historical and scientific opinion. British-Israelism was very much a product of its time. It not only interpreted current events in light of prophecy and mirrored popular conceptions about the destiny of the British race, it also followed the general trends and accepted the underlying assumptions of contemporary scholarship. Though it arrived at quite unorthodox conclusions, the theory adopted the findings and opinions (carefully selected) of many of the most popular and respected scholars of the day.

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[3]Campbell, *The Lost Tribes: A Refutation of the Theories of Messrs. Wilson, Hine and Other Writers Who Have Identified Them With the English Nation*, 7.

The limitations of secular evidence, however, were clear. Uncovering the historical and ethnological marks of a people who, for all intents and purposes, had been 'lost' for several centuries was no easy task. Moreover, since it had been prophesied that Israel was to be divorced or cut off from its traditions and religion for a certain period of time, even that it would lose sight of its own identity, it was not going to be possible simply to search for a people who resembled Hebrews either in customs, ethnicity, or religion. "Blindness" as to their identity had been imposed on them from God and for all the power of nineteenth-century scholarship the complete picture of Israel's migrations into Britain would be known only in His time. British-Israelites must meanwhile be content with secular evidence which, while suggestive, could offer only probability rather than certainty. This was, in fact, the designated role of secular evidence in the Identity. As said above, British-Israelites were not interested in constructing the history of the lost tribes as such but only in connecting their history to that of Britain's ancestors. Secular evidence, therefore, simply supported and strengthened the conclusions already reached through the study of prophecy. This is not to say that it was unimportant by any means, only that its role was secondary and complementary. Frederick Charles Danvers explained that, "the identity of the Anglo-Saxon races as the true descendants of lost Israel, from the fact that they are in possession, in these latter days, of the promises made to the patriarchs of old, may truly be said to be based upon circumstantial evidence." The parallels between the prophecies made to Israel and the state of contemporary Britain were without a doubt conspicuous. Scientific evidence's chief purpose was to secure that there were tangible and corporeal reasons for these parallels, for "if it can be shown, with any reasonable de-

gree of probability, that [the Anglo-Saxons] are the actual lineal descendants of the Israelites, it is submitted that the evidence will then be removed from the region of circumstantiality, and placed upon a much higher standard of proof."[4] The best which secular evidence could offer, at present, was probability. Yet this 'probable evidence,' British-Israelites asserted, should not be dismissed out of hand simply because it lacked absolute certitude. "The deepest thinkers," Bishop Titcomb could report, "have allowed that 'probable evidence' may form the basis for rational belief."

> The late Dean Mansell showed this in one of his Bampton lectures, before the University of Oxford. He said:-- "What is the nature and scope of probable evidence? In its very nature it wants the fulfillment of experience. Nevertheless, it is capable of producing rational belief. Every fresh occurrence of circumstance is a ground upon which we reason, and upon which we predict, infer, and conclude, something which is not mathematically included in those circumstances, but to which they point. This ever new, fresh, ceaseless flow of interpretation and construction is not knowledge, because, in its very nature, it is a substitute for knowledge. We reason toward a thing, though we do not know it. Yet it is not blind guess work. There is evidence in it, and it produces belief. Those who will not recognise such evidence, who reduce all that is not certainty to pure ignorance, and divide the realm of mind into demonstration and darkness, must have expunged from their understandings all obligation to attend to facts."[5]

Scientific evidence, therefore, could at least suggest the probability of the Identity if not incontestably prove it. It could legitimize the truth of Israel's migrations in the eyes of reasonable people. Though certainty as to the descent of the Anglo-Saxons from the Israelites could only be reached by a final leap of faith, substantial secular evidence could make that leap less treacherous.

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[4]Danvers, *'Israel Redivivus'*, 38.

[5]Titcomb, *A Message to the Church*, 15-16.

This chapter will outline the most important realms of secular evidence employed by British-Israelites. The historical, linguistic, and ethnological indications of Hebrew decent were the most often emphasized and systematically presented. Again, however, these arguments were the work of individual Identity scholars rather than of any central organization. Consequently, though they all followed the same general pattern they often differed in their details, sometimes dramatically. What emerged was a smorgasbord of facts and arguments which allowed each Identity believer to choose those which he found most convincing. Though different works sometimes contradicted each other, no one asserted their interpretation of the facts as dogmatically true.[6] These were scholarly pursuits not divine revelations. They were, therefore, open to human error and debate and in the end had to be accepted on their intellectual merit alone. Though it was never in doubt that scholarship would eventually lead to the demonstration of Britain's identity with Israel, the paths by which this would be achieved were open to interpretation. Thus, it will not be possible to supply every available interpretation of Israel's wanderings and decent. Rather what will be presented here are those arguments and pieces of evidence which were either most representative of the general trends of belief, or those which presented the most striking aberrations. From these, the role and importance of secular evidence in

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[6]For explicit examples of this type of disagreement see Colonel Jackson Musprat Williams, *The Sakai, and Not the Scuths of Herodotus, the Descendants of the Israelites and Our Ancestors* (London: W. H. Guest, 1882), in which he points out the errors in Oxonian's *Israel's Wanderings* (1881); also Henry A. Marchant, *Monumental Facts v. Historical Fictions*, with "Notes on Language" by Henry Proctor, F.R.S.L., M.R.A.S. (London: R. Banks and Son, 1909) which attempts to show that the ancient histories used by British-Israelite authors are often unreliable and thus result more in confusion than in conviction. The newly-discovered and translated Near Eastern monuments, Marchant argues, were much more reliable and strongly confirmed the Identity.

the presentation of the Identity will be gauged. Moreover, it should become clear that while British-Israelism did not have the support of most people in the scholarly community, it did depend upon the bulk of contemporary historical, philological, and ethnological research to legitimate its own conclusions.

**The Footprints of Israel**

Of all the secular disciplines recruited by British-Israelites, history was the most used and the most respected. They considered the history of Israel's wanderings into Britain a serious subject demanding more than just frivolous assertions. To establish a connection between the British and the Hebrews, British-Israelites searched scores of modern and ancient historical works. If the Israelites had migrated into Great Britain, surely some "footprints" of their wanderings existed.[7] The resulting narratives of Israel's captivity, migration, and arrival in Britain offered enough factual information and accepted scholarly opinion to lend an air of *plausibility* to Britain's descent from Israel. The ancestors of the British race had come, in successive waves, from the east. On this point most scholars were in agreement. To assert that segments of the British population, such as the Irish, were "nation[s] of Oriental origin," was generally not out of bounds with contemporary history and ethnology.[8] To narrow this oriental origin down to the Israelites was far

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[7]For example, Henry P. Keighly, *'Phoster.' Light Cast on the Footprints of Israel From Media to the British Isles* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1880); also Rev. John Mackey Hodge, M.A., *Are Not These the Footsteps of Jezreel? An Enquiry into Some of the Historical and Traditional Evidences of the Hebrew Descent of the British People* (London: W.H. Guest, 1877).

[8]Arthur James Johnes, Esq., *Philological Proofs of the Original Unity and Recent Origin of the Human Race* (London: John Russell Smyth, 1846), 51.

more tenuous. British-Israel adherents, however, confidently believed that this could be done.

British-Israelites repeatedly emphasized the importance of historical evidence, even if they were not always straightforward in their use of it. If the truth of their claim could be shown independently from Biblical prophecy, they believed, the Identity would be unassailable. Prophecy itself, which most adherents considered the Identity's strongest foundation, did not carry enough weight in contemporary secular society to stand alone. The true value of historical evidence, therefore, was its ability to convince those who did not accept the infallibility of Scripture. W. J. Cockburn-Muir explained that for those who accepted Scripture, "the argument from prophecy is a perfectly sufficient ground on which to argue the proposition it is now our business to consider." Many, he conceded, did not. For these skeptics, Cockburn-Muir asked, "can we not indicate an *a posteriori* [historical and scientific] argument on which to base some proof of the proposition that the British race, and their congeners, are descended of the ancient Hebrew people?--for the benefit of those who are unprepared to accept the *a priori* argument from prophecy."[9] Identity writers were quite confident that this could be done. The writings of ancient and modern historians graced many pages of British-Israel history. Herodotus, Tacitus, Strabo, Josephus, Geoffrey Keating, Sharon Turner, George and Henry Rawlinson, and Paul B. Du Chaillu were among the favorites of British-Israelite writers. From these and other authors, Identity historians culled pieces of information concerning the fate of the

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[9]W. James Cockburn-Muir, *Israel in Britain: The Collected Papers on the Ethnic and Philological Argument. Prefaced by 'A Resume of the Scriptural Argument' by Philo-Israel.* 3rd Thousand (London: W. H. Guest, 1876), 15-17.

Israelites, the history of ancient races, and the origin of the peoples of Great Britain. They then engaged in efforts to match the mysterious fate of the one to the equally ambiguous origin of the other. "Two great questions have for many generations puzzled and set at defiance the intelligence of the great and learned of our land," Edward Hine explained. "First, What has become of the Lost Tribes? Second, Who were the ancestors of the English People?"[10] The task of British-Israel history was to connect the two. It must be admitted, of course, that British-Israelites rarely engaged in any type of historical criticism. They were less interested in the motivations or biases of the authors they cited than in the information which they could glean from them. Therefore neither the political concerns of Herodotus and Josephus nor the religious opinions of Keating and Turner were taken much into account when their works were used to bolster Identity evidence. Identity writers also tended to ignore or lightly pass over evidence which contradicted their Israelitish descent. While it is too much to accuse British-Israelites of blatantly corrupting secular history to their ends, it is not unfair to conclude that their use of such sources was selective at best.[11]

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[10]Hine, *Seventeen Positive Identifications*, 3.

[11]This same selective use of sources and opinions was to be found in British-Israel philology and ethnology as well. Critics of the theory lost little time in pointing out the suspicious and dubious nature of British-Israel scholarship. As early as 1878, a one-hundred page treatise appeared which confronted British-Israel evidence and attempted to show the spurious nature of its claims. See Philalethes [pseud.], *The Israel of God. Philo-Israel Answered* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1878). This tract in turn inspired "W. E." to pen, *Our Opponent Philalethes Answered, Respecting Israel's Gifts and Calling* (London: William Poole, 1879).

Lectures, pamphlets, tomes, and multi-volume works composed the arsenal of British-Israel histories. Though they varied, often widely, in their details, the general trend is unmistakable. British-Israelism demanded a fundamental reassessment of the people of Israel. Israelites must be understood within, not apart from, the events and trends of their age. The seafaring tribe of Dan, for example, was situated on the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean and was always in close trading contact with Phoenicians. It only made sense, British-Israelites asserted, that this tribe would be aware of and take part in the trading and colonizing activity of the latter people, including contact with Britain and Ireland. Moreover, it could be shown that many of the 'Germanic' and 'Celtic' tribes had migrated through or from the area of Israel's captivity. Did it make sense that Israel would remain aloof from all of this? There was, British-Israelites claimed, influential evidence which connected Israel to these peoples, or at least indicated that Israel took part in this general westward migration. As early as 1852, the ethnologist R. G. Latham had urged scholars to include the people of Israel in their analysis of the day to day activity of ancient world. "Neither do I think," he explained in his *Ethnology of Europe*,

> that the eponymous of the Argive *Danai* [early colonizers of Greece] was other than that of the Israelite tribe of Dan; only we are so used to confine ourselves to the soil of Palestine in our consideration of the history of the Israelites, that we treat them as if they were *adscripti glebæ*, and ignore the share they may have taken in the ordinary history of the world. Like priests of great sanctity, they are known in the holy places only--yet the seaports between Tyre and Ascalon, of Dan, Ephraim, and Asher, must have followed the history of seaports in general, and not have stood on the coast for nothing. . . . In these remarks I by no means say that the resemblance is not accidental; although my opinion is against it being so. I only say that a conclusion which would have been suggested if the tribe of Dan had been Gentiles has been neglected because they were Jews.[12]

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[12]R. G. Latham, M.D., *The Ethnology of Europe* (London: John Van Voorst, 1852), 137-38. Also Colonel J. C. Gawler, Keeper of the Crown Jewels *Dan the Pioneer of Is-*

Latham's conclusion, which was quoted often by British-Israelites, formed part of the underlying assumption of British-Israel history: that the Israelites would have been just as knowledgeable of the world around them as any other people in their area and would most likely be actively involved in trade and colonization. The renowned Anglo-Jewish scholar Moses Margoliouth spoke highly of the ancient Hebrews' colonial and commercial prowess. Archeological discoveries in Spain showed their trading presence there as early as the days of Solomon. "Taking for granted that it is highly probable that the Jews visited Spain in the days of David and Solomon, in company with Phoenician merchants," he asserts, "may we not extend that probability to Britain?"[13] The British Isles were well known to the ancient world (including Israel) and open to colonization and immigration. Once dispossessed of their land, moreover, the Israelites would have little reason to resist the general trends of migration into Western Europe. The project at hand was connecting the tribes of Israel to the early invaders of Britain. Using all the evidence which lay at their disposal, a number of British-Israelites devoted themselves to this task.

It was John Wilson, the founder of the Identity, who introduced key historical correlatives between the Israelites and the British. Most importantly, Wilson was the first to argue that the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons had come from the same area, and had

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*rael. His Early Enterprise, His Settlements and Connection with the Scythians* (London: W. H. Guest, 1880), 11.

[13]Rev. Moses Margoliouth, *The Jews in Great Britain: Being a Series of Six Lectures Delivered in the Liverpool Collegiate Institution, on the Antiquities of the Jews in England* (London: James Nisbet, 1846), 31. For further discussion of Jews' ancient colonial and commercial aptitude see *Jewish Chronicle* (London), 28 May 1875.

emerged at the same time, of Israel's captivity. "We saw before," he explains, "that the Scripture leaves captive Israel in the north,--in the cities of the Medes, and in other places in the northern possessions of Assyria. Now it is a remarkable fact, that to this very quarter are the Anglo-Saxons traced by Sharon Turner, in his valuable history of this people. Where Israel was lost, the Saxons were found."[14] More particularly, Turner had found the exact people who held the best claim as the ancestors of the Saxons. It had long been believed that the Anglo-Saxons had emerged from Scythian tribes yet,

> of the Scythian nations which have been recorded, the Sakai or Sacae are the people from whom the descent of the Saxons may be inferred, with the least violation of probability. They were so celebrated, that the Persians called all the Scythians by the name of Sacae. They seized Bactriana, and the most fertile part of Armenia, which from them derived the name of Sakasina. . . . That some of the divisions of this people were really called Sakasuna, (from which we have our word Saxon, or Sacson) is obvious from Pliny; for he says that the Sakai who settled in Armenia, were named Sacassani, which is but Saka-suna, spelt by a person who was unacquainted with the meaning of the combined words; and the name Sacasena, which they gave to the part of Armenia they occupied, is nearly the same sound as Saxonia. It is also important to remark, that Ptolemy mentions a Scythian people sprung from the Sakai, by the name of Saxons.[15]

These Sakai or Sacæ, Wilson concluded, were none other than the lost Israelites, the name being derived from the patronymic Isaac with the initial aspirated 'I' dropped. This important opinion, from a scholarly authority of such high repute as Turner, did much to bolster the claims of Identity writers. Turner's work, in fact, became one of the cornerstones of British-Israel history. Wilson's use of him was imitated by later writers, even

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[14]Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin*, 3rd American ed., 157.

[15]Sharon Turner, *History of the Anglo Saxons*, 1: 100; John Pinkerton, *A Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths* (London: G. Nichol, 1789). Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin*, 158-59.

those, like Edward Hine, who significantly changed and developed Wilson's ideas.[16] This part of his work, however, was never discredited in British-Israel circles.

Being the founder not only of the Identity, but more specifically of the Teutonic school, Wilson concluded that all of the northern Europeans had sprung from the Israelite tribes. The ethnic relation between the Saxons and the other Germanic nations seemed to mandate this interpretation. Historically, however, the connection between the Israelites and the whole of the Germanic nations was more difficult for Wilson to prove, and he never attempted to do so by means of historical writings. Wilson was forced to return to his training as a phrenologist and point out similarities in 'moral' and racial characteristics between the people of northern Europe and the Israelites rather than make direct historical connections.[17] As the principal interpretation of the Identity shifted from the Teutonic to the Britain-as-Israel school, this task was simplified. It was now necessary only to prove that certain peoples (i.e. the ancient Irish, the Cymri, the Angles, Saxons, Danes, and Normans) were Israelites rather than the entire population of northern Europe, thus disposing of the need to explain how the Israelites were transformed into a huge population of various Germanic peoples in a very short period of time. With the focus narrowed, historical investigations concerning the ancestry of the British now proceeded apace.

Impracticality aside, to attempt a detailed discussion of every British-Israelite line of historical argument or even to assess all the historical works themselves, goes beyond the

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[16]Hine, *Seventeen Positive Identifications*, 6-7.

[17]Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin*, 3rd American ed., 138-85.

purpose of this chapter. Instead, it will be more profitable to closely consider a few representative writers and then draw broader conclusions from their work. Colonel John Cox Gawler, a distinguished serviceman and, by the 1870s, Keeper of the Crown Jewels, was one of the earliest British-Israelite historians.[18] Apart from his many contributions to the journal literature, Gawler's two most important writings were *Our Scythian Ancestors Identified with Israel* (1875) and *Dan, the Pioneer of Israel*, published in 1880. His works, though lacking some of the deep research and tight analysis of later British-Israel writers, nevertheless foreshadowed much of the later historical inquiry. Gawler set up the parameters for later British-Israel histories as well as identified many more sources from which to find evidence. Most importantly, Gawler drew attention to and delineated the two great components of Israel's migration to Britain which were adopted, more or less intact, by later writers. In tracing the Scythians and Sakai (Angles, Saxons, and Cymri) as well as the tribe of Dan (Tuatha de Danaan, Danes, Jutes), he was able to account for the fate of the Israelites and the origin of most component peoples of Britain. His findings, though suggestive, were admittedly inconclusive. "In bringing forward points of identification between 'our Scythian Ancestors' and the lost Tribes," Gawler was quick to acknowledge, "it must be understood that the subject is yet in its infancy. A good amount of evidence has been obtained, but it is a mere drop in the ocean to what we may expect. We want more research, more persons who will apply themselves studiously to the investigation of the subject."[19] Once again, it is clear that history's purpose, as far as British-

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[18]"Obituary--Colonel John Cox Gawler" *Times* (London), 4 August 1882.

[19]Gawler, *Our Scythian Ancestors Identified With Israel, Reprinted from The Hebrew Christian Witness and Prophetic Investigator* (London: W. H. Guest; Edinburgh: Ma-

Israelites were concerned, was to verify from secular sources what they had accepted on faith. Gawler, like all other believers, had great faith that historical evidence for the Identity existed, it merely needed to be discovered. His two works ably represent at least the general outline of British-Israel history. Supplemental evidence was added by later authors but the essential narrative which Gawler put forth remained largely unchanged.

Working off Wilson's use of Turner, Gawler also turned to several of the ancient historians including Herodotus, Strabo, and Diodorus. From these authors, Gawler was able to deduce that the Scythian tribes emerged as an independent and formidable people around 600 BC, or one hundred years after the Israelites' captivity; time enough, he concludes, for them "to increase and 'feel their own feet.'" The Scythians' customs and manners, according to these and other authors, were far superior to the other tribes with whom they lived (Herodotus, bk. iv, cap. 46; Strabo, bk. viii., iii. 7; Keating, *History of Ireland*, 24); this could only be explained, Gawler concluded, by the fact that they had once been a civilized nation transplanted into the midst of barbarians, i.e. the Israelites. Specifically of note, Gawler indicates, was the fact that, like the Hebrews, the Scythians forbade the use of swine in both meals and sacrifices. (Herodotus, bk. iv. cap. 63). It is true, Gawler admits, that the Scythians were known for extremely barbarous practices including human sacrifices and cannibalism (certainly not the characteristics of Israel) yet he concludes that "it seems most probable that some of the worst reports were manufactured for them by those jealous of them; fostered also possibly by the Scythians them-

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cLaren & MacNiven, 1875), 4. For a similar caveat see idem, *Dan, the Pioneer of Israel*, v.

selves to deter other nations from attempting to explore their country."[20] The Sakai, to whom Turner and others attributed the origin of the Anglo-Saxons, were a principal tribe among these Scythians, their reputation being so great that some ancient authors found that the name 'Sakai' was used as the generic term for all Scythians (Herodotus, vii. 64). "I therefore identify the Sakai with the Scythians on the statements of the most distinguished ancient historians," Gawler explains, "and their name seems to denote an Israelitish origin. The locality in which they made themselves best known, viz., Asia Minor, near the Caspian, is held by most writers to be the place to which the Israelites were transplanted."[21] The Sakai were thus proclaimed to be the captive Israelites and, on the basis of Turner and others, the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons.

Other British-Israel historians would paint an even clearer picture of the Sakai and their connection with the Israelites. British-Israelites maintained that since the 9th century BC. the Israelites had been known as *Beth Omri* (House of Omri) after their King Omri. The Assyriologist Dr. Hincks, in *Records of the Past*, confirms this, and, moreover, explains that in the Assyrian tongue such a name would be pronounced *Beth Khumri.* Khumri, then, became another name for at least a portion of the ten tribes according to contemporary ancient historians.[22] From time immemorial, British-Israelites further ex-

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[20]Ibid., 4-6.

[21]Ibid, 6. See Strabo, Bk. xi., cap. viii., sec. 4, and Bk. vii., cap. iii. sec. 9; Pliny, Bk. vi., cap. 11 & 16.

[22]Edward Hincks, *Records of the Past: Being English Translations of the Assyrian and Egyptian Monuments* (London: S. Bagster, 1873), 5: 28, 41; *Western Asiatic Inscriptions of the British Museum,* vol. iii., p. 10; Sir Henry Rawlinson, *Atheneaum* 27 March 1852. See Savile, *Are We Israelites*, 17-19.

plained, the Welsh had been known as Cymri (pronounced Khumri).[23] What was needed, then, was a connection between the Khumri and the Sakai. British-Israelites believed that they had found it. Henry Marchant explained that Dr. Pinches, in his *Assyria and Babylonia*, claims that Khumri "was originally pronounced Ghomri . . for the Armenians used G where the Assyrians and Greeks used K or Kh."[24] These Ghomri or Gimiri, Marchant and others maintained, were the ancestors of the Welsh Cymri, employing the Rawlinsons as their authority for this identification.[25] In his "Appendix to Book IV: Essay I" in *Herodotus*, George Rawlinson identifies the Gimiri with the Cimmerii, and these with the Welsh Cymri.[26] British-Israelites determined that if the Gimiri could be identified with the Cymri, as Rawlinson did, they could also be connected to the Khumri, which is pronounced in exactly the same way. George Rawlinson further contends that the name

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[23]Henry Proctor, F.R.S.L., M.R.A.S., "Notes on Language," in Henry Marchant, *Monumental Facts v. Historical Fictions*, Appendix.

[24]Marchant, "Historical Facts," in Rev. L. G. A. Roberts, *Palestine into Britain: Scripturally, Historically, Ethnologically, Numismatically and Ecclesiastically Considered, with Maps and Diagrams* (London: Imperial British-Israel Association, 1920), 27-28.

[25]The identification of the Cymri or Gimiri with the Khumri was the weakest link in this chain. This was, in fact, the link which caused Rev. Bourchier Wrey Savile to reconsider and ultimately reject his belief in the Identity. "It is quite true that I once thought there was evidence, from misunderstanding a term in the Cuneiform Inscriptions," he wrote in 1883, "to show that the Beth Khumri, i.e., 'the House of Omri," or Israel, were the same as the Ancestors of the British nation." After much archaeological and ethnological study, he claims, "I discovered my mistake." Savile, "Letter to the Editor of the Banner of Israel," reprinted in *A Letter Addressed to the Rev. Edward Young, of Clifton*, 4.

[26]George Rawlinson, M. A., "Appendix to Book IV. Essay I: On the Cimmerians and the Migrations of the Cymric Race," in *The History of Herodotus* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1860), 3: 150-57.

Gimiri appears to be "the Semitic equivalent for the Arian name of *Saka* or Scyths."[27] While he expressed his belief that both these words were less ethnic names than descriptives meaning perhaps "wanderers," his brother Henry, in a note in the same essay, suggests that Gimiri may, "simply mean 'the tribes' generally, corresponding thus to the Hebrew [word]."[28] Either definition, according to British-Israelites, surely described the ten captive tribes. Thus the Saka or Sakai were connected to the Gimiri or Cymri and these to the Israelites either under the name Beth Isaac or Beth Khumri. British-Israelites would find explicit support for this direct, if rather complicated, connection in the well respected *London Quarterly Review*.[29] Dr. Margoliouth also maintained that the Welsh "appellation KYMRY is no more 'true-born English' than is the term GÆL or Welsh. The nomenclature of both . . . are of purely Hebrew birth." *Kymry*, he maintained was "closely allied to the name Omri, the notorious king of Israel, who consummated the

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[27]Ibid., 152. Also note by Henry Rawlinson to "Appendix To Book VII: Essay I," *Herodotus*, 4: 171, n. 15.

[28]Ibid., note by Henry Rawlinson, n.1, 150; 152.

[29]In a long review article on a number of recent works on Assyrian history, the historian and divine William Harris Rule contends that this possible Israelitish connection might explain how the "two [British] races which can be said to have retained their prominence and nationality to the present day," the Saxon and the Cymry, had come together "to make England 'chief among the nations' of the earth, as foreigners readily allow." "Together," he continues, these races "form the most important elements of the vast British Empire." [W. H. Rule], "Assyriology" *London Quarterly Review* 59 (January 1878): 293-96.

idolatrous system amongst the Ten Tribes."[30] Kymry or Cymri, then, was linked to both the Israelites and the Sakai.

Apart from similarity of names, archaeological evidence also connected the Cymri to the Israelites. Numerous Hebrew gravestones had been discovered in the Crimea (also named for the Cymri).[31] Tombstones with epitaphs reading "Rabbi Moses Levi died in the year 726 of our exile," and "This is the tombstone of Buki, the son of Izchak, the priest. May his rest be in Eden at the time of the salvation of Israel. In the year 702 of the years of our exile," and the like, were removed from the Crimea to the St. Petersburg Museum. These "attest that there were Jewish communities in the Crimea as early as the year AD. 6, and that the Jews there felt themselves to be descended from the ten tribes."[32] How was it, British-Israelites asked, that in the Crimea, named for the ancient Cymri, existed numerous remains of Israelites? If these Cymri were but the same people as the Sakai under another name, as Rawlinson attested, then these grave-markers made it even more probable that the Khumri-Israelites were closely linked to the Welsh Cymri and thus to the Sakai, whom Turner claims as the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons. In this way Gawler and other British-Israelites made a reasoned argument that the connection between the Anglo-Saxon's "Scythian Ancestors" (whether Sakai, Gimiri or Cymri) and the

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[30]Rev. Moses Margoliouth, ed., *Hebrew Christian Witness* (October 1877); quoted in L. G. A. Roberts, *British History Traced From Egypt and Palestine*, 2d ed. (London: Covenant Publishing, 1927), 19.

[31]Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, 3: 153 n. 8.

[32]*Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæological* (Vol. III: Part 1); see Gawler, *Our Scythian Ancestors*, 11.

lost Israelites had received at least tacit support from the findings of numerous contemporary authorities.[33]

Gawler's next work followed the wanderings of the other great migration of Israel, that of the tribe of Dan. The Danites took two different paths into Britain according to both Gawler and later British Israelites. An early portion of the tribe of Dan, the story goes, traveled by sea in the years from at least 1600 BC., first from Egypt and Palestine to Greece and finally to Ireland.[34] Dan is identified with the legendary Egyptian Danaus and, following Latham, his tribe with the Greek Argive Danai. Apart from the similarity of names, Gawler finds that the heraldic symbol of the tribe of Dan, being an eagle with a serpent in its claws, matched exactly that of the invading Danai or Danaan.[35] The Israelite tribe of Dan, he contends, had numerous contacts with Greece. First, a section of it had invaded Greece during the Israelitish sojourn in Egypt. Under a legendary leader

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[33]It should be noted, however, that a few scholars whose writings were employed by British-Israelites to bolster their claims spoke out explicitly against the Identity. George Rawlinson, as cited above, authored an article in *Leisure Hour* against Edward Hine's publications. Margoliouth, who allowed a number of Identity articles to appear in his magazine *Hebrew Christian Witness* (including much of the text of Gawler's *Our Scythian Ancestors*), concluded in the January, 1874 edition of his publication that the Identity had little foundation. Even Edward Augustus Freeman, whom British-Israelites often cited to prove that the British race was homogenous, stated in one of his Oxford lectures in 1887 that, "there are indeed some with whom one cannot argue; one cannot argue with an Anglo-Israelite, as one cannot argue with a man who says, with far better grounds for his belief, that the earth is flat." "Teutonic Conquest in Gaul and Britain; Two Lectures," *Four Oxford Lectures, 1887*, 67.

[34]Herodotus ii. 91; vii. 94 and Strabo Bk. v., cap. ii., sec. 4; Bk. viii., cap. vi., sec. 5, for discussions of Danaus and the Danai; William E. Gladstone in *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age* (Oxford: University Press, 1858), 1: 355-68, 391, details the Danans and their recurrent mention in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

[35]Gawler, *Dan the Pioneer of Israel*, 16-17.

Danaus, the Danai left Egypt and set up colonies there.[36] Danaus and his followers, most scholars agreed, if they did exist were most likely not Egyptian in race since Egyptians, as Bishop Thirwall noted, were adverse both to emigration and sea voyages.[37] Later, Gawler contends, Dan is mentioned in the Old Testament as intimately connected with 'Javan,' most often translated as Greece.[38] According to Josephus, in 144 BC., the leader of the Jews sent a letter to the Areus, king of the Lacedemonians, proposing alliance and friendship. "It is found in writing," the letter proclaims, "that the Lacedemonians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham."[39] The Lacedemonians, in their reply also acknowledged this relationship, leading the historian J. P. Yeatman to conclude that "it seems very probable that Dan, the son of Jacob, was one of the fathers of the Greeks,

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[36]For historical discussions of the Danai see Henry Reginald Hall, *The Oldest Civilization of Greece: Studies of the Mycenaean Age* (London: D. Nutt, 1901), 4; John Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece* (London: T. Kinnersley, 1831), 1; A. H. L. Heeren, *Historical Researches into the Politics, Intercourse, and Trade of the Principal Nations of Antiquity* (Oxford: D. A. Talboys, 1833), II: 122; idem, *A Manual of Ancient History: Particularly With Regard to the Constitutions, the Commerce, and the Colonies, of the States of Antiquity*, 3rd. ed. (Oxford: D. A. Talboys, 1840), 211; Charles Rollin, *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Grecians, and Macedonians*, 18th ed. (London: William Tegg, 1847), II: 318. These and other sources are used by Danvers in *Israel Redivivus*, 151-55.

[37]George Grote, *A History of Greece: From the Earliest Period to the Close of the Generation Contemporary with Alexander the Great* (London: John Murray, 1888), II: 191; Bishop Connop Thirlwall, *A History of Greece*, 2d. ed. (London, 1845-52).

[38]Gawler, *Dan the Pioneer of Israel*, 11.

[39]Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, ed. Sir Roger L'Estrange (London, 1702), XII: 5.

and gave his name to the Danai."[40] If all of this were true, however, and Gawler admits that a good deal of legend is mixed up with fact at this period of history, there was little connection to Great Britain at this point. All that had been shown so far was Dan's connection to Egypt and Greece.

Yet Dan's connection with Britain and Ireland, Gawler and other British-Israelites affirmed, could be displayed with relative ease. The early commercial tendencies of the Hebrew peoples were well established. This was especially true of the Phoenicians who were close relatives of the Israelites. The American philanthropist and amateur ethnologist Charles Loring Brace contended that both the Jews and the Phoenicians, have manifested a wonderful capacity for traffic and commerce." The Phoenicians, pushed on by Israelitish incursions into their land and their trade, he continued, "had sprinkled the coasts [of the Mediterranean] with colonies, and factories and mercantile stations. Their ships were freighted with tin from England."[41] Phoenician contact with Britain and Ireland (and thus by extension potential Israelitish contact) had been suggested by numerous historians of both Britain and Palestine.[42] Villanueva, in his *Phoenician Ireland*, even suggests that many of the 'Phoenicians' settling in Ireland came from the city of Dan

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[40]John Pym Yeatman, F.R.H.S., *The Shemetic Origin of the Nations of Western Europe, and More Especially of the English, French, and Irish Branches of the Gaelic Race* (London: Burns and Oates, 1879), 33-35.

[41]Charles Loring Brace, *The Races of the Old World: A Manual of Ethnology* (London: John Murray, 1863), 56-58, 66-67.

[42]See George Smith, *The Cassiterides: An Inquiry into the Commercial Operations of the Phoenicians in Western Europe, With Particular Reference to the British Tin Trade* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1863).

found, "at the foot of Mount Lebanus, the boundary, towards the north, of the ten Israelitish tribes."[43] The strongest plank in this line of argument concerns a race who conquered Ireland at a very early period, the Tuatha de Danaan, or 'tribe' of Dan.[44] The Tuatha de Danaan were described by Geoffrey Keating and the *Annals of Ireland* as a highly civilized people due to their long association with the Greeks and Phoenicians.[45] Professor W. K. Sullivan, in his edition of Eugene O'Curry's *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, maintained that the Tuatha de Danaan and another invading people of Ireland, the Milesians or Scots, were of the same race.[46] O'Curry himself reports that, "it is stated in very old copies of the *Book of Invasions*, and other ancient documents, that it was the Mosaic law that the Milesians brought into Erin [Ireland] at their coming."[47] This law was received from Moses by Cae Cain Breathach, "who was himself an Israelite." All these scholars' findings, British-Israelites maintained, could only be reconciled

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[43]Joachim L. Villanueva, *Phoenician Ireland*, trans. Henry O'Brien, 2d ed. (London: Joseph Robins, 1837), 80, 184.

[44]Moore, *Ancient Pillar Stones of Scotland*, 59n., provides a translation of Tuatha as 'people' or 'tribe' where he quotes Max Müller's *Science of Language*, 211, to this end.

[45]Keating, *General History of Ireland*, trans. Dermond O'Connor (Dublin: James Duffy, 1861), 86-94; *The Annals of Ireland of the Four Masters*, trans. Owen Connellan, notes by Philip MacDermott (Dublin, Bryan Geraghty, 1846), 121n. Both Keating and another chronicler of ancient Irish history, British-Israelites pointed out, mention that the early colonists of Ireland were pushed out from their lands by the Assyrians. Roger O'Connor, ed. and trans., *Chronicles of Eri: Being a History of the Gaal Sciot Iber, or, the Irish People* (London: R. Philips, 1822), 1: 7, 15-17, quoted in Milner, *Tara Vindicata*, 4. Also Rev. William Henry Poole, *Anglo-Israel, or the Saxon Race Proved to Be the Lost Tribes of Israel* (Detroit: Winn & Hammond, 1889), 206.

[46] Eugene O'Curry, *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, ed. W. K. Sullivan (London: Williams and Norgate, 1873), I: lxxii.

[47]Ibid., II: 3, 4, 20, 24, 29, 51.

by the acceptance of the proposition that the Tuatha de Danaan were the Danai of Greece, and these the Dan of Israel.

The other segment of this tribe went by land and waterways through Europe, up to Jutland, which was later named Dan-mares, or "Dan's country."[48] From there, the invasion of England by Jutes and Danes from Denmark was part of universally accepted history. "Who were the Danes and the Jutes?" Dr. Moore asked:

> The *Vetus Chronicon Holsatiæ* asserts that the Danes and Jutes are Israelites of the tribe of Dan [this was also quoted by Sharon Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons* (1828), 1: 151, n.7]! Saxo-Grammaticus also says that Dan was the first king of the Danes. These are not good authorities, perhaps, but not worse than those who assume to know better. Ancient tradition is certainly as good as much modern ethnology, and it has so often proved to be true, that it is not always wisdom to laugh at it.[49]

These Danites left Palestine before the Assyrian captivity and wandered through Europe giving their name to places as they went. The Danube, Dniester, and Dnieper rivers, Danzig, Denmark, and numerous places in Britain and Ireland, including Donaghadee (meaning in Hebrew "Dan my witness"), are all waymarks, according to Gawler, of the migrations of the tribe of Dan.[50] The final bond which Gawler uses not only to connect the tribe of Dan with the Danaan and the Jutes and Danes but also to his other branch of

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[48]Rev. W. H. Poole, *Fifty Reasons Why the Anglo-Saxons are Israelites of the Lost Tribes of the House of Israel* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1879), 41. Poole refers to Keating's *History of Ireland* for the etymology of Denmark though this author was unable to confirm this reference.

[49]Moore, *Ancient Pillar Stones of Scotland*, 147.

[50]Gawler, *Dan Pioneer of Israel*, 12-13. Gawler makes a point that the tribe of Dan did rename a section of its conquered land in Palestine after Dan their father, thus they would most likely continue this practice in the course of their wanderings. Judges xviii. 29.

the Israelites, the Sakai, came from a inscription found but twenty miles outside Bombay.[51] This Hebraic inscription spoke of a people known as Saka as the favorite of God. In conjunction with them is noted the people of Dan, whom, it says "departed twice" (reflecting the two distinct migrations which Gawler describes). Both these peoples are connected to the Gotha, simply another name for Jutes.[52] "Assuming the correctness of this rendering," Moore concludes, "it presents a singular and most suggestive corroboration of the conclusions arrived at in this volume, as to the connection and origin of the Danes, the Goths, and the Saxons; since here we find a people or a tribe named Dan distinctly associated with the Goths and the people of Saka."[53] Here then, lay the groundwork for the historical contention that Israelites migrated into the British Isles. By carefully selecting and arranging relevant facts and scholarly conclusions, British-Israel historians were able to construct an admittedly jumbled and incomplete but, they argued, suggestive narrative of the wanderings of Israel into the British Isles.

In the decades following the publication of Gawler's two works, a good deal of further evidence was presented and a number of his points were more fully worked out by later British-Israelites. Nevertheless, his ideas were never overturned, only modified, and

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[51]James Bird, Esq. Secretary of the Bombay Asiatic Society, *Historical Researches on the Origin and Principles of the Bauddha and Jaina Religions* (Bombay: American Mission Press, 1847), plate 44.14; translated by George Moore, *The Lost Tribes*, iv-vi; quoted by Gawler, *Dan, the Pioneer of Israel*, 22.

[52]For the connection between the name Jutes and Gotha or Goths see Yeatman, *The Shemetic Origin of the Nations of Western Europe*, 208-17.

[53]Moore, *The Lost Tribes*, vi.

the sources he used (plus many others) were employed regularly by others.[54] For all the use of contemporary scholarship and "strained arguments," the historical narrative of Israel's migrations into Britain remained lacking. There was no written history of the lost Israelites nor any conclusive work on the origin of the British peoples in the centuries before Christ (though Du Chaillu's work, published in 1889, like Sharon Turner's of a century earlier, traced them to the area around the Black Sea).[55] Such difficulties were neither ignored nor lost on British-Israelites. "Men demand from us," Philo-Israel complained,

> that there be exhibited to them such a chain of historical evidence that would suffice to convince the judges in a court of law, respecting the pedigree or past history of the British nation, proving to them, without a breach in the chain of descent, that the Israelites of the Ten Tribes who left the South-west of the Caspian, westward for Europe, are the very races who entered these islands from the East. They demand, in fact, what is unattainable; because the histories of the period, some centuries B.C., which witness the exodus of Israel from Assyria, have not been written, and a confu-

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[54]For historical works which employed and expanded upon Gawler's findings see, Thomas C. Balmer, *The Israelitish Origin of the Anglo-Saxons, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh: An Historical Proof* (London: W.H. Guest, 1877); Colonel John Garnier, *The Ten Tribes From Captivity Until Now: A Critical Analysis and Historical Proof of the British-Israel Theory, Also, the Imperial Power and Rising Up of Israel and the Enmity of the Nations in the Latter Days* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1903); Historicus, *Who Are the Ancestors of the British People? A Historical Review* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1917): Philo-Israel, *The Historical, Ethnic, and Philological Arguments in Proof of British Identity with the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, Clearly and Simply Stated* (London: W.H. Guest, 1879); James Rankin, *The Anglo-Cimbri and Teutonic Races Proved to Be the Lost Tribes of Israel* (London: W. MacIntosh, 1871); Elisabeth Wilson, *Lights and Shadows of Ancient European Mythology, Language, and History. Or, Odin's Runa of Yggdrasil* (London: S. W. Partridge, 1881). Most of those who wrote the history of the migrations of Israel into Britain were amateurs, a few however, were historians. W. M. H. Milner, author of *Israel's Wanderings*, had received first honors in history from Oxford. F. C. Danvers, who wrote *Israel Redivivus*, also published *The Portuguese in India*, 2 vols. (London: W. H. Allen, 1894) after extensive research in Portuguese archives.

[55]Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, I: 25-6.

> sion has covered the movements of the Eastern nations at the time the Roman Empire broke up.[56]

Indeed, almost every British-Israelite allowed that the very best that could be shown from secular sources, for the time being at any rate, was the *probability* of Britain's descent from Israel. "There is just enough haziness," Caroline Pearse admitted of the historical connection, "to give license to objectors, and there is just enough probability to encourage advocates. Still I am disposed to believe that further research will prove in time, from history, that the Israelites and Saxons were the same people."[57] The substantial doubt which remained on the part of most scholars and the general public alike, adherents believed, would evaporate as historical research bore out the truths of Biblical prophecy. The probability of their descent from Israel must suffice in the mean time. What is clear is that British-Israelites did not try to discredit contemporary scholarship in order to prove their Israelitish descent; rather they attempted to turn it to their task.

Beyond simply reporting isolated facts and the suggestive correlatives between the late history of the people of Israel and the early history of the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons, British-Israelite historians, in fact, reflected much of the method and idea of Victorian history as a whole. As Rosemary Jann explains:

> if the nineteenth century was the age of history, histories themselves were a genre that most efficiently reconciled the contradictory needs of Victorian consciousness. Victorian histories asserted the authority of the real but provided the satisfactions of romance. They emplotted the actual so as to demonstrate the triumph of good over evil, recovery over loss, identity over disinheritance. . . . Even more important was history's ability to reconcile faith with reason. In the hands of these writers, history

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[56]Philo-Israel, "The Testimony of History That The British Are Israel," *The Anglo-Israel Almanack for the Year 1888*, 33.

[57]Pearse, *Japhetic or Semitic*, 37.

> brought the facts of the past to bear on the truths of belief. It confirmed with law the order posited by faith. In an increasingly secular age, history took the place of dogma as the mainstay of meaningfulness.[58]

The story of the loss of Israel and its discovery in the British Isles was the story of good over evil, recovery over loss, and identity over disinheritance. This was the most spectacular of all romances and yet it explained and fulfilled the truth of the Word of God. British-Israelites were perhaps the most adept at using the facts of the past to confirm the truths of belief. It was, like much other Victorian history, an effort to construct "desired presents and re-ordered pasts": to display, perhaps even create, a past which made the present intelligible and desirable.[59] The wanderings of Israel, their gathering into the British Isles, and their dominance of the world was the historical enactment of the will of God. British-Israelite histories never lost sight of this idea. Yet the concept of a God active in the history of the British nation was by no means unique to the British-Israelites' interpretation of the story of the race. God and His providence played an important role in much Victorian history.[60] Objections were often made to the historical conclusions which British-Israelites reached, but their assumption that God worked his will through human history was rarely dismissed by their critics.

The attempt to trace the origin of the races which came to occupy the islands of Great Britain was a recurring theme of nineteenth and early-twentieth century British history.

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[58]Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985), 207.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Ibid., xxvi-xxvii; Christopher Parker, *The English Historical Tradition Since 1850* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1990), 2-3, passim.

British-Israelites were by no means the only ones to attempt to find a racial heritage which explained the characteristics and qualities of the British people. Even solidly 'mainstream' historians such as Edward A. Freeman and John Richard Green wrote their histories of Britain with the racial component clearly in mind. There was a trend, moreover, to look towards the East for their origin, particularly towards central Asia.[61] John Pym Yeatman, of Emmanuel College Cambridge and Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, while rejecting the major contentions of British-Israelism, believed that the British were of "Shemetic" origin.[62] Nearly fifty years later, Laurence A. Waddell found what he believed to be irrefutable archeological and historical proof indicating that the races of Britain were of primarily Phoenician origin. "That the British have inherited the seafaring aptitude and adventurous spirit of the Aryan Phoenicians appears obvious," he concludes. "Yet other fruits of Britain's exceptional Aryan inheritance," he continues, "were the establishment of democratic institutions, centuries before they were adopted by other countries, and her world-wide colonial and commercial enterprise, reproducing the maritime adventures of the Phoenician Aryans."[63] What Waddell explained through in-

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[61]Apart from authors mentioned elsewhere in this chapter see Daniel H. Haigh, *Conquest of Britain by the Saxons* (London: John Russell Smith, 1861); Beale Poste, *Celtic Inscriptions on Gaulish and British Coins. Intended to Supply Materials for the Early History of Great Britain* (London: John Russell Smith, 1861); John Williams. Archdeacon of Cardigan. *Essays on Various Subjects Connected to the Pre-Historic Records of the Civilized Nations of Western Europe, Especially of that Race Which First Occupied Great Britain* (London: n.p., 1858).

[62]See Yeatman, *Shemetic Origin of the Nations of Western Europe.*

[63] Laurence Austine Waddell, *The Phoenician Origin of the Britons, Scots, and Anglo-Saxons. Discovered by Phoenician and Sumerian Inscriptions in Britain, by Pre-Roman Briton Coins and a Mass of New History* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1924), 382. Also Charles LaSalle, *Origin of the Western Nations & Languages: Showing the*

herited Phoenician aptitude British-Israelites attributed to the Israelitish covenant. The underpinning motives and assumptions, however, were identical. This was true with much contemporary historical scholarship. The Identity incorporated accepted facts and scholarly opinions, it mirrored the nature and purposes of Victorian history, and it looked towards the same area of the world for the progenitors of the race. The historical aspect of British-Israelism was aberrant only in its conclusions.

**Language of Our Fathers: English and the Hebrew Tongue**

Second only to history, language forged the strongest secular link between the Israelites and the British people. On the surface, connecting the two peoples by means of linguistics seemed foolhardy. It was generally concluded that Hebrew and modern English were fundamentally unrelated, emerging as they did from two different classes of languages, the Semitic and the Aryan, or Indo-European.[64] It seemed improbable that the tribes would emerge from captivity speaking a tongue from one family of languages and then arrive in their 'appointed place' with a language from another. "It is strange," the Rev. Jasper Wilson suggested in his condemnation of the Identity, "that in all their [supposed] wanderings westward [the tribes] left no trace anywhere of the Hebrew language, or even of the Chaldee dialect of the Hebrew, which they would become familiar

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*Construction of and Aim of Punic, Recovery of the Universal Language, Reconstruction of Phoenician Geography, Asiatic Source of the Dialects of Britain, Principal Emigrations from Asia* (London: J. Heywood, 1883); and J. L. Villanueva, *Phoenician Ireland.*

[64]For a discussion of the rise of the Aryan and Semitic paradigm in nineteenth century philology see Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), chap 1.

with in the land of captivity. But further, they had not a single word of Hebrew, nor of any dialect of Hebrew, when they reached England."[65] Was it possible to answer such an objection, especially in light of the rapid advances being made at the time in philological studies? With their characteristic energy, creativity, and diligence, British-Israelites lent themselves to this work. What eventually emerged was, once again, a suggestive set of correlatives, theories, and possibilities which while by no means conclusive could paper over the objections to the satisfaction of adherents and inquirers alike.

Two arguments emerged (and eventually fused) to explain the apparent linguistic difficulties surrounding the Identity. The first argument did not deny the fundamental difference between the two languages, rather it embraced it and based itself upon it. If Israel were to be 'lost' as the prophets had foretold, then they could not retain any characteristics which might identify them, including their language. Israel was to become a nation 'divorced' from its traditions and its God (Hos. 1: 9) and eventually lapse into idolatry and paganism. With no reason to hold onto its language, the people of Israel would, as the modern Jews had done, adopt the languages of those people in the midst of whom they had been exiled. All that had to be done in this case, then, was to show that the Ten Tribes would have come into contact with the Indo-European class of languages early in their captivity. "Consulting Max Müller's Genealogical Table of the Aryan Family of Languages," Bishop Titcomb asserted in 1875, "I found 'Old Armenian' among the number. There, then, it stood before my eyes, that, in the very place where the Ten Tribes

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[65]Wilson, *British-Israelism Not Necessary to the Fulfilment of Scripture and Prophecies*, 21.

were located, the language with which they must have first come into contact with was Aryan!"[66] The assertion that the British and the Hebrews spoke entirely different languages did not, then, form an objection to the Identity. Not only had it been foretold that Israel would lose its language, but the peoples with whom the captive Israelites would have undoubtedly had early contact spoke Aryan languages. It was only natural that they would adopt these tongues and thus be inducted into the Indo-European-speaking class of peoples. There was, of course, no irrefutable proof that such a course of events had taken place, but irrefutable proof was not the goal. All that Titcomb hoped to show was that this adoption of Aryan speech was entirely possible, perhaps even probable.[67] Though it could not be proven true, at least it could not be proven false and therefore it commanded further investigation if not belief.

While this interpretation was never rejected by British-Israelites, it was nevertheless underplayed and modified in the face of a more positive connection between the languages of the Hebrews and the British.[68] The argument that the British were Israelites because they *did not speak Hebrew* could not easily carry conviction. What needed to be found was some indication that the modern British language and the ancient Hebrew were

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[66]Right Rev. Bishop Titcomb, *The Anglo-Israel Post-Bag; or, "How Arthur Came to See It"*, 3rd ed. (London: W. H. Guest, 1879), 8.

[67]Ibid., 9, 19, 23.

[68]See Herbert Aldersmith, *Fulness of Nations*, 2d ed. (1898), 173n., for a letter from F. A. Darnell, Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces in Barbados, concerning the loss of the "negroes'" African languages and their replacement with English and French. Much of the same thing was probable, Darnell argued, with the Israelites among the Aryan-speaking peoples of Asia.

in fact in some degree cognate. Fortunately for the British-Israel thesis there were many indications that this was the case. It was possible, perhaps even more likely, British-Israelites conceded, that though the Israelites were to be cast off from their traditions and language, some similarity between modern English and the speech of their fathers must exist. Their loss of language was more likely a gradual process, leaving remnants of the Hebrew behind. Edward Hine, as "Identification the Eleventh", explained the simultaneity of this situation as follows:

> That we only, of all the nations of the earth, are doing the works of Israel, therefore must be Israel; thus the fact of our adopting the English language, and not the Hebrew, therefore using "another tongue," [Isa. 28: 11] is a proof of our identity. Yet this question has to be considered ethnologically and anthropologically, both of which sciences declare language to be a principal agency in the tracing of peoples. The declared opinion of eminent scholars is, that the English language contains the roots of no less than eight hundred Hebrew words.[69]

Hine's assertion concerning the affinity of the Hebrew and English languages, though he supplies no scholarly reference, was no idle claim. A significant body of research, undertaken over the previous century, contended that the languages of Britain, including the Welsh, Irish, and Anglo-Saxon, were closely connected to the Hebrew. Defying Jasper Wilson's claim that there was no connection of language between the two peoples, British-Israelites were able to produce ample scholarly proof of affinity.

Most Identity scholars who dealt with the question of language did so by quoting numerous philologists who found similarities between the Hebrew and British languages. Robert Govett and Jacob Tomlin, however, went considerably further, producing fully

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[69]Hine, *Forty-Seven Identifications* (1900 ed.), 15.

worked-out comparative studies of the languages.[70] Robert Govett, as a result of his study, confidently proclaimed that he "should be inclined to say that there are not five per cent. of SAXON words which cannot be traced to the HEBREW."[71] While Govett concentrated upon the similarity between the vocabularies of the two languages, Tomlin and other British-Israelites went even further: "not only in words does this close affinity exist between our original mother tongue and the Hebrew, but in the arrangement of ideas and the simple structure of sentences it has also a near agreement." He and others noticed that a transliteration of Hebrew scriptures into English was far easier than a transliteration of any Greek or Latin text.[72] "This similarity between the two languages was noticed by Tyndal," Tomlin noted, "the first translator of the Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament into English. He said, 'The Greke tongue agreeth more with the Englyshe than with the Latyne; and the properties of the Hebrue tongue agreeth a thousande tymes more with

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[70]Robert Govett, *English Derived From Hebrew: With Glances at Greek and Latin* (London: S. W. Partridge, 1869); Rev. Jacob Tomlin, B.A., *A Comparative Vocabulary of Forty-eight Languages, Comprising One Hundred and Forty-six Common English Words, with Their Cognates in Other Languages, Showing Their Affinities with the English and Hebrew* (Liverpool: Arthur Newling, 1865).

[71]Govett, *English Derived From Hebrew*, 1.

[72]Colonel Henry William John Senior, *The British-Israelites: or, Evidences of Our Hebrew Origin, Gathered from History, Genealogy, Philology, and Heathen Customs* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1885), 24; Principal George Adam Smith, in his address at the Aberdeen Meeting of the National Bible Society of Scotland, celebrating the tercentenary of the Authorised Version of the English Bible, March 13, 1911, was quoted as saying that, "he did not know of any two languages which presented more points of resemblance to each other than the Hebrew of the Old Testament writers, and the English of our translators." *Northern British-Israel Review* 1 (April 1911): 5.

ye Englyshe than with the Latyne.'"[73] Tomlin gave formal recognition to John Wilson's theories as the probable explanation for the affinity between the two tongues. Nevertheless he was still able to secure Sir John Herschel, the philologist Dr. Thomas Marsh, and Rev. Dr. Moses Margoliouth, among many others, as subscribers to his work.

Without fully recognizing it, British-Israel linguists found themselves caught in the middle of perhaps the most contentious debate in contemporary philology. This debate centered upon the relationship between the Semitic and Aryan families of language; that is, whether these two groups had anything in common or were in any way cognate. Indeed, it was debated whether these two could be traced back to a common and universal tongue: the language spoken in Paradise. This debate involved more than religious and scientific questions concerning the structures and progress of languages, it also helped set the stage for the Aryan-Semitic conflicts and comparison which dominated nineteenth and twentieth-century anti-Semitism. Philology was more than the discovery of language and its origins, it became a key to understanding the races. By the nineteenth century, language, Olender reports, "was considered the best source for discovering the distinctive

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[73] Tomlin, *A Comparative Vocabulary*, xvi. Cockburn-Muir further concludes that the English tongue was, contrary to popular opinion, not Germanic. "The true tests, however, of close affinity on language are grammatic structure and idiomatic texture," he states. He then produced seven fundamental differences between the basic grammatic structure of the English and German. "The general aspect of the English tongue, to my mind of the English language, is that of a Shemetic tongue which has been for a long period in contact with Aryan tongues, and suffered a long transfusion of verbal roots and dialectic forms, while it has preserved with tenacity the primitive basis of its grammatical and idiomatic structure." Yeatman reprinted Cockburn-Muir's conclusions as evidence for his contentions about the origin of the British people. Cockburn-Muir, *Israel in Britain*, 19; Yeatman, *The Shemetic Origin of the Nations of Western Europe*, 183-84.

traits of different peoples."[74] The two families of languages represented two distinct civilizations, which, though they may have come from the same original and nurtured in the same cradle, as Ernst Renan proposed, became incompatible.[75] The one (Aryan) was vibrant with civilization, mythology, progress, art, and science, the other (Semitic)was stagnant, contributing only the idea of monotheism, an outgrowth of this stagnancy and ultimately adopted and perfected by Aryan Christianity. By proposing an affinity between the languages (not to mention the races), British-Israelites were linking the two civilizations. For some British-Israelites, the British were a Semitic people mingled amongst, and thus adopting portions of the language of, the Aryans. For others, the line between Semites and Aryans was imaginary, each being only one branch of the same great race sharing common linguistic elements.[76] Identity adherents, however, were not alone in casting doubt upon the supposed strict rigidity of the Semitic-Aryan partition. Resulting from a number of motivations, not the least being the Biblically-inspired quest to find the original tongue spoken in Paradise, numerous non-Identity scholars found connecting links between these two great linguistic branches.[77] British-Israelites offered many of

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[74]Olender, *Languages of Paradise*, 5.

[75]Ernst Renan, *Oeuvres Complètes*, 8: 578; quoted in ibid., 13.

[76]A compilation of a number of scholarly writing casting doubt on the validity of the Aryan-Semitic divide was presented in 1934 by Brigadier-General W. H. Fasken in his *Israel's Racial Origin and Migrations* (London: Covenant Publishing, 1934), 15-27.

[77]It would be a mistake to divide philological study in the nineteenth century between religious-minded 'cranks' and strictly scientific scholars. As Olender shows, old theological questions and the Hebrew Bible itself strongly influenced the most serious contemporary linguists including Ernst Renan, F. Max Müller, Adolphe Pictet, and Rudolf F. Grau. Olender, *Languages of Paradise*, 136-42.

these connections, no matter what their motivation, as evidence for Britain's Semitic, and more particularly Hebrew, origin.[78]

A large body of literature, reaching back to at least the late eighteenth century, resulted from this quest to establish Hebrew (or some other more primitive language) as the original and universal tongue. Much of this linked the languages of Britain and Ireland with that of the Israelites. In 1786, the Irish antiquarian Colonel Charles Vallancey concluded "that the Irish, Hebrew, and Punic languages were different dialects of the same tongue."[79] Over a hundred years later H. Gordon Palmer reported that he had "discovered at least 4,000 Irish words, good and true Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic; some are Aramaic, and some are to be found only in the Targums, Talmud, and in Rabbinical Hebrew."[80] The discovery of Hebrew in the ancient Irish had implications for all the

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[78] British-Israelites often quoted the philologist Rev. John Davies, who concluded that the Semitic languages and the Aryan were fundamentally connected and that "such a connection cannot be explained by theory or mere accident, or an imitation of the common sounds of nature. It points to a primitive oneness of language, and of the human race." Davies, "On the Semitic Languages, and Their Relations with the Indo-European Class, Part II. Paper Read December 8, 1854, with Thomas Watts, Esq. in the Chair," *Transactions of the Philological Society* 13 (1854): 269. Tomlin was motivated in his *Comparative Vocabulary* not only by his British-Israel beliefs, but also in his belief that Hebrew was the parent tongue of all languages. Tomlin, *Comparative Vocabulary*, xx.

[79]William Beauford, A.M, "On the Origin and Language of the Irish, and of the Learning of the Druids," in Charles Vallancey, *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicus* (Dublin: Luke White, 1786), 228; Vallancey, "An Essay on the Antiquity of the Irish Language," in ibid., 251-336.

[80] Rev. H. Gordon Palmer, B.A., "Stray Notes on the Irish Language," *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* (Dublin), 1 September 1899; Johnes, *Philological Proofs of the Original Unity and Recent Origin of the Human Race*, 51.

'Celtic' languages, including the Welsh and the ancient British.[81] In the *Monthly Magazine* for August 1796, "Merion" (whom Margoliouth called "an eminent Cornish scholar") contended that "it would be difficult to adduce a single article or form of construction, in the Hebrew Grammar, but the same is to be found in the Welsh; and there are many whole sentences in both languages exactly the same in the very words."[82] Proposing an 'Aramitic' and thus Semitic origin for the ancient Britons, or at least for their language, G. D. Barber looked to the ancient bardic literature. What he claimed to discover were numerous Hebrew words and phrases common to the ancient British tongues and modern English, including *Gwenhwyvach* meaning in Hebrew, he deduced, "people of Jehovah."[83] Taliesin (600 AD), the chief of the ancient British bards, declared, according to Edward Davies, that his ancient lore had been delivered to him in Hebrew, and Davies

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[81]Thomas Stratton, *The Affinity Between the Hebrew Language and the Celtic: Being a Comparison Between Hebrew and the Gaelic Language, or Celtic of Scotland.* 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Maclachan and Stewart; London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1872). Prys Morgan has argued that the "predominant idea during the seventeenth century was that the Welsh was somehow linked with Hebrew, and this corresponded with the myth that the Welsh could be traced back to one of the grandsons of Noah." "From a Death to a View: The Hunt for a Welsh Past in the Romantic Period," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: University Press, 1983), 67.

[82] Merion, "On the Structure of the Welch Language" *The Monthly Magazine and British Register* 2 (August 1796): 543; idem, "Affinity of the Welsh and Hebrew," ibid. (September 1796): 609-11. Gläs, "Welsh Hebraisms," *Cambrian Quarterly Magazine and Celtic Repertory* 4 (2 July 1832): 381-87; Eliezer Williams, "Historical Anecdotes of the Welsh Language," in *The English Works of the Rev. Eliezer Williams* (London: Craddock and Co., 1840), 133-38.

[83]G. D. Barber, *Suggestions on the Ancient Britons: In Three Parts* (London: J. R. Smith, 1854), 61, also part I, chaps. 4 & 5. Senior, *British-Israelites*, 26.

also found a good number of Hebrew words in numerous other bardic tales.[84] Even Moses Margoliouth had given repeated notice to the affinity between the Hebrew and the Welsh and Cornish, using it as proof that there had been immigrant Jews in Britain from a very early period.[85] In May of 1895 Archdeacon Howell, in an address given at the annual meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews, noted that there was, "much in common between the Welsh and Hebrew languages; and I have it, on good authority, that our Welsh translation of the Old Testament Scriptures comes nearer to the Hebrew original than almost any other."[86] The inability to explain such similarities led Albert Hyamson to conclude in 1907 that they were either accidental coincidences or simply the product of early Jewish commercial intercourse with Britain.[87] These explanations lacked any persuading force for British-Israelites.

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[84]*Angar Cyvyndawd*, in Edward Davies, Chancellor of Christ's College in Brecon. *The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids, Ascertained by National Documents* (London: J. Booth, 1809), 94, 572; also Moore, *The Lost Tribes*, 172-3; idem, *Ancient Pillar Stones of Scotland*, 109-10.

[85]Margoliouth, *The Jews in Great Britain*, 33; idem, *The History of the Jews in Great Britain*, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bently, 1851), 1: 22-24; idem, *Vestiges of the Historic Anglo-Hebrews in East Anglia* (London: Longmans, Green, Rider, and Dyer, 1870), Appendix, 65-6; *Congress of the British Archeological Association* (1883?); quoted in Senior, *British-Israelites*, 23. British-Israelites found Margoliouth's conclusion about the presence of ancient Jews in Britain as being the solution to this strange affinity of language to be, "wholly inadequate. For to suppose that any number of Jewish immigrants could so leaven the language and ideas of a wholly different native race, is against all reason and experience. No. The Welsh and Cornish languages, or language, were impregnated with Hebrew *because the races themselves were Hebrew*, and not merely from their contact with immigrant Jews." Robert Douglas, "Dr. Margoliouth on Language," *Two Witnesses* 1 (June 1888): 304-5.

[86]"The Venerable Archdeacon Howell's Comparison Between the Welsh and the Jews," *Banner of Israel* 19 (24 July 1895): 310-11.

[87]Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England* (London: Macmillan, 1907), 2.

In the modern English and its 'Germanic' components, as well, traces of the Hebrew were to be found. Both Govett and Tomlin worked from contemporary English as their base for comparison. Other scholars referred themselves to the original Anglo-Saxon thus bringing the Semitic-Aryan question to the forefront.[88] Allowance had been given that the Celtic, or Cymric, may well have been influenced by the Semitic family of languages since the race had most likely originated from the same area. James Cowles Prichard considered that while the two families of languages were absolutely distinct, the Celtic seemed to have elements of both. Segments of the Celtic language, he concluded, appeared to form "an intermediate link between [the Aryan languages] and the Semitic, or perhaps indicates a state of transition from the character of one of these classes of language to the other."[89] The Semitic element within the Irish, ancient British, or Welsh was, therefore, not unexpected. But the modern English, or even the original 'Germanic' Anglo-Saxon was not so easily transposed over the Aryan-Semitic divide without calling the validity of the entire paradigm into doubt. The Anglo-Saxon portion of the language

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[88]Contending a racial and philological homogeneity among Britain's component peoples, British-Israelites needed to find scholars who could support a Hebraic foundation for the Anglo-Saxon element. They did so in Canon Samuel Lysons. After finding more than five thousand "Hebro-Cymric" words among the languages of Britain, Lysons concluded that, "without any disparagement of the Anglo-Saxon element, which undoubtedly occupies a large place, (*emanating, by the way, also from the same source*,) there seems strong grounds for concluding that the Hebro-Cymric is the superstructure upon which our present language is built up . . . these, again, are traceable back to the language of Chaldea." Samuel Lysons, M. A., F.S.A., *Our British Ancestors, Who and What Were They?* (Oxford and London: John Henry and James Parker, 1865), 359, emphasis mine.

[89]James Cowles Prichard, "Appendix--Note On the Semitic Languages," in *The Eastern Origin of the Celtic Nations Proved by a Comparison of Their Dialects* (Oxford: S. Collingwood, 1831), 190-91.

had long been considered by philologists to lay squarely within the Indo-European family of languages. Yet small fractures in this dogma were visible. Francis Crawford read a paper to the Philological Society in London in 1858 in which he hoped to show that the division between the two language families was not as great as many supposed, and that Hebrew laid at the base of all. Crawford, however, largely turned away from the Celtic languages and its cognates and instead took the greater part of his examples,

> from the Anglo-Saxon language, which will be found on examination a most useful auxiliary in the investigation of the ultimate forms of Hebrew. With respect to the analogous words above instanced, it is worthy of note that in some cases we find an agreement not merely as to mono-syllabic roots, but even in more composite forms. Nor is this so much to be wondered at, if we believe with the compiler of the *Compendious Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, that "the Saxons like all the Teutons or Germans were of Oriental origin."[90]

"Not a few students," the *Chicago Tribune* could assert by the last decade of the century, "are now disposed to believe that the Hebrew is the parent of a large part of the Saxon, German, and other tongues which belong to the same subfamily of languages as they do."[91] British-Israelites, therefore, found themselves in a position to cast some doubt upon the rigid dichotomy between Aryan and Semitic languages, with a good deal of scholarly support. "Many are of the opinion," one British Israelite remarked, "that the Aryan class of languages have no affinity whatever with the Semitic group. If that is the

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[90]Rev. Francis Crawford, "On the Existence of Biconstal Prefixes of Composition in Hebrew as Evidenced by Comparison with the Indo-European Class: being a Paper read April 8, 1858 with Rev. John Davies in the Chair, and on April 22, 1858 with the Rt. Rev. Lord Bishop of St. David's, President in the Chair," *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1858): 63-69; idem, "On Constant Affixes and Affirmatives in the Hebrew Languages, as Illustrated by Reference to the Indo-European Analogies, Part II: Being a Paper Read June 3, 1858, Professor Key in the Chair," ibid., 192.

[91]"Jews and Their Language," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 November 1891.

true state of things, it follows as a consequence that to ascribe an Abrahamic descent to the Indian and European nations is a fond conceit."[92] But as this division was not as wide as many contended, British-Israelites concluded, the descent of the British from Israël became, once again, possible. The close affinity between the languages moved it even further in the direction of being probable.

The Identity straddled the philological and racial debates which raged during the nineteenth century. With great alacrity it was able to exploit any confusion within the dominant "Aryan vs. Semitic" paradigm as well as take hold of the arguments of many of its opponents. It was also able to take much of the paradigm at face value and, using its comparative methods, conclude that the English language and its components belonged to the Semitic family. If this all seems more like mythology than solid linguistic scholarship, that is not an incorrect evaluation. Neither, however, does that place British-Israelism outside the bounds of contemporary philology. Despite the power which the ideas of positivism and scientism exerted over nineteenth-century scholarship, according to Jean-Pierre Vernant philological study still consisted largely of,

> what can only be called a tissue of scholarly myths. These myths were steeped in erudition, informed by profound knowledge of Hebrew and Sanskrit, fortified by comparative study of linguistic data, mythology, and religion, and shaped by the effort to relate linguistic structures, forms of thought, and features of civilization. Yet they were also myths, fantasies of the social imagination, at every level.[93]

Victorian philology, much like Victorian history, was the product of this social imagination, informed to 'facts' as it may have been. It sought to make sense of the world and its

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[92]Sylvester, *The Heir of the World*, 19-20.

[93]Jean-Pierre Vernant, foreword to *Languages of Paradise*, by Maurice Olender, x.

races according to pre-conceived notions and categories. To reach back into the past and find illustrious ancestors, whether historically defined as Angles, Saxons, and Celts, or linguistically as Aryans, was the ultimate goal. British-Israelism's place within this context was staked out with relative ease.

By the end of the century, the Aryan-Semitic dichotomy came under increasing scrutiny, thus giving a strange impetus to British-Israel's contention. Professor Karl Rodosi, whose work was given notice in the *Chicago Tribune* article cited above, contended that the present European nations "are not Aryans--but true descendants of Semitics and Hebrews, and that the wonderful notion of the Indo-Germanic [Aryan] theory is not at all tenable or worthy of credence."[94] The *Tribune*, however, recognized the difficulty which Rodosi's thesis faced. The great obstacle in the acceptance of the theory, the paper concluded, "is the fact that it is a discarded one."

> Up to about two centuries ago it was generally believed that the Hebrew was the parent of all the other languages, and the revulsion came when it was discovered that the Latin, Greek, and most other European tongues have a close affinity with the Sanskrit, which was the language of the people who invaded India perhaps not far from the time of the Jewish exodus from Egypt. It is well known to be more difficult to obtain assent to a truth which has been once discarded.[95]

Rodosi, however, was unguarded in his conclusions. His findings, he believed, were of monumental importance not only for historical but for social reasons. If he could show that the German, Slavic and Anglo-Saxon races were, with the Jews, "from one primal

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[94]Julius Silversmith, M. A, preface to *The Origin of Modern Culture Languages and Their Derivation From the Hebraica*, by Karl Rodosi, Ph.D. (Chicago: The Occident Publishing Co., 1892), iii.

[95]*Chicago Tribune*, ibid.

race--Semites" they must all then "recognize themselves as descendants from that once noble peoples. How lovely and sublime it were if brethren dwelt in peace and union together."[96] Rodosi's thesis offered the solution to both inter-European war and anti-Semitism. Rodosi also implies, and his editor explicitly concurred, that should his ideas be proven true then "the question of the existence and identity of the supposed lost ten tribes of Israel is in reality solved! We are then the true Semites--the cultured nations are indeed the descendants of the Hebrew race!!"[97] Rodosi's challenge to the Aryan-Semite divide forced a consideration of the fate of the tribes of Israel as well as their relationship to the Europeans. What Rodosi represented moreover, namely an uncertainty and fluidity in linguistic scholarship, opened the door to a *possible* Hebrew-English connection and science's role of supplying probable proof for the British-Israel contention was furthered as a consequence.

**The Scions of Abraham: Ethnological Proofs of Descent**

To prove a racial connection between the Hebrews and the English, British-Israelites found it necessary to contend with the relatively new, and very inexact, science of ethnology.[98] Victorian ethnologists and anthropologists, much like Victorian historians and

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[96]Rodosi, *Origin of Modern Culture Languages*, xvii.

[97]Silversmith, iv-v; Rodosi, xvii.

[98]This chapter's division of philology and ethnology is made with caution. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, language was looked upon as a relatively sure indication of racial identity. Comparative philology, according to George W. Stocking Jr., was "an approach that for several decades provided the methodological underpinning for a study called 'ethnology.'" G. W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 24. The division is made, however, not only for manageability but also since even after A. H. Sayce's conclusion that "language is no test of race, but only of social contact" ("Language and Race," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 6 [1875-

philologists, worked largely from pre-conceptions about the races and their respective characteristics.[99] Racial science took on many forms, most of them of spurious value, in the effort to study, establish, and prove the hierarchy of races. The 'scientific racism' which resulted from the numerous and often highly contentious late-century anthropological debates formed the foundation of racial ideas until at least the end of World War II.[100] Though the doctrines espoused by racial scientists of the later half of the nineteenth century can now be fairly labeled "false and pernicious," it would be a mistake to simply dismiss them as "pseudo-science."[101] As Nancy Stepan argues, the story of nineteenth century racial thought might well be described as the story of bad science but not pseudo-science, as its conclusions were honestly debated by nearly all the respectable scientific communities of the day.[102] This is not to say that nineteenth-century racial science was monolithic. The development, acceptance, and eventual rejection of methods, paradigms, and theories of racial classification was a common practice. There were, in fact, only two constants in Victorian racism after 1850, "the belief in the natural inequality of human beings, and a readiness to generalize freely about the character of racial and ethnic groups."[103] A good deal of latitude existed around these two continuities. Yet this flux

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76]) became commonly accepted, British-Israelites continued to use philological arguments to show their Israelitish descent but kept them distinct from the ethnological ones.

[99]Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 62-63.

[100]Stepan, *Idea of Race in Science*, ix.

[101]Lorimer, "Theoretical Racism in Late-Victorian Anthropology": 405.

[102]Stepan, *Idea of Race in Science*, xvi.

[103]Lorimer, "Theoretical Racism," 428.

and uncertainty, leading at times to animosity between scholars and a general confusion among the public, worked to the advantage of British-Israel theorists as they sought to make their ideas known. British-Israelism, however, did not simply exploit the scientific confusion surrounding the racial division of man, it closely reflected and actively took part in the debate. Most of the major methods and conclusions of Victorian anthropologists were adopted and used by Identity scholars. The foundations of British-Israel racial science, including the division of the races, phrenology, craniology and other forms of somatometry, linguistics, the monogenesis-polygenesis debate, and cultural anthropology, were the foundations of racial science as a whole.[104] The ethnological aspect of British-Israelism was not, then, simply a matter of a few cranks railing against a solid monolith of Victorian racial thought, but rather it was the voice of one, admittedly less-respected, group of racial theorists among many in a highly dubious debate.

It should be recognized, however, that the nature of British-Israel ethnology resembled the 'amateurism' which dominated the field in the mid-Victorian years more than the

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[104]The monogenesis-polygenesis debate was the mainstay of pre-Darwinian anthropology, though its legacy could be felt throughout the rest of the century. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 62-69; Stepan, *Idea of Race in Science*, 1-5; Lorimer, "Theoretical Racism," 405-06. Monogenesists held that, in line with the Biblical account of creation, all the races were related through a common ancestor. Polygenesists asserted that the races were different species and had sprung from unrelated progenitors. British-Israelites, implicitly accepting the Biblical account of creation, were solidly within the monogenesis camp. A small number of British-Israelites, however, spoke of the existence of "pre-Adamite man," contending that the non-white races were formed prior to Adam and that members of the Caucasian race are the only descendants of Adam and thus the culmination of God's creation. James Rowland White, *Extracts From the Flying Roll. Being a Series of Sermons Compiled For the Gentile Churches of All Sects and Denominations and Addressed to the Lost Tribes of the house of Israel* (London: n.p., 1879); Joseph Trank Wheeler, *The Proscribed and Chosen of God; or, The Vision of Empire, Babylon, and the Stone Nation* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1909).

professionalism which began to slowly emerge after 1870. As Douglas Lorimer points out, as late as 1900 most of the members of the formal anthropological societies were drawn from the military, clergy, politics, and medical profession. For even the most active of these members, Lorimer concludes, "anthropology was not their profession but their avocation."[105] The fluidity of thought which resulted from the dominance of amateurs allowed for many of those in fields only loosely connected to ethnographic study to make claims of expertise which today seem distended. Those in the military, especially in imperial service, wrote and delivered anecdotal papers drawn heavily from their own experiences on the nature of foreign races and cultures. Clergy members worked to show the applicability of the Biblical narrative to the anthropological study. Thomas Stratton's own justification of his philological study highlights the latitude which existed between ethnology and other professional subjects. Trained in medicine, Stratton considered himself qualified to undertake philological and ethnological study. In the letter to his superior in the Navy, in which he served as a medical officer for twenty-six years, which prefaced his study Stratton explains that,

> as that branch of Medicine called Physiology includes an account of the different races of mankind, and as a description of the various divisions of the human family has to be illustrated chiefly by referring to the languages spoken by them, there is some reason for saying that the affinity of languages is a subject within the wide area of Medical Inquiry.[106]

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[105]Lorimer, "Theoretical Racism," 407-8; Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 257-69.

[106]Thomas Stratton to Sir Alexander Armstrong, K.C. B., Honorary Physician to the Queen and Director-General of the Medical Department of the Navy, May, 1872, printed in Stratton, *The Affinity Between the Hebrew Language and the Celtic*, 3.

Philology and its implications for ethnology here came under the unlikely purview of medicine. Ethnological opinions were proposed and readily considered by those who had little academic training in the field. Their own areas of expertise seemed to both inspire and qualify them to undertake ethnological research. The parallels between the state of mid-Victorian anthropology and British-Israel ethnological study are at least two-fold. First, the prosopography of members in the anthropological and British-Israel organizations bears a striking resemblance. In both cases, the military, clergy, medicine, and politics were well represented. Second, the pride and racial assumptions of the imperial spirit dominated both. Not only did each attract members who had experienced the empire first-hand either in the form of military or civil service but the defense of British imperialism was within both a popular and warmly-received theme.[107] Though lacking in support from the formal anthropological associations, and by the end of the century methodologically out-of-date, until the last years of the century British-Israel ethnology looked strikingly like its mainstream counterpart.

British-Israel's most basic advantage in the ethnological realm was that its contention concerning Hebrew and British racial affinity fit within the two most widely accepted divisions of the human race. One of these divided humanity into three races, the other into five. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the idea of three great races was popularly accepted. "Distinctions in bodily characteristics," wrote one historian, "such as form, color and features, divide the human species into three chief types or races, known

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[107] John Beddoe, *Memories of Eighty Years* (Bristol, 1910), 315; quoted in Lorimer, "Theoretical Racism," 409.

as the Black or Ethiopian Race, the Yellow or Mongolian Race, and the White or Caucasian Race."[108] Allowances being made that the races did often shade into each other, the clear division was still employed. Based though it was in the biblical account of the Deluge, which credited Noah's three sons, Ham, Japheth, and Shem, with the foundation of the three races, by the end of the nineteenth century this division had significantly altered. Earlier theologians, philologists, and naturalists believed that the Europeans had descended, with the Asians, from Japheth while the Israelites and other middle Eastern peoples had a Shemetic (Semitic) origin. British-Israelites and others found this discussion to fly in the face of common sense. Europeans had far less physically in common with the Asians than with the so-called Semites, thus it made far more sense that the Semites and the Europeans both belonged to the Caucasian race, though perhaps to different branches.[109]

The division of the humanity into five races was pioneered by the German Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) in his *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (1781).[110] His division consisted of the Caucasian (a term which he originated), Asiatic, American,

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[108]Philip Van Ness Myers, *Ancient History*, rev ed. (London: Ginn & Company, 1904), 14.

[109]Myers divided the Caucasian race into the Semitic, Hamitic, and Aryan branches, while John Wilson contended that the Europeans and Jews were "improved" Semites. Myers, ibid., 16, Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin*, 3rd American ed., 33-37; also Major-General A. M. Rainey, *The Distribution of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Israel an Arian Speaking People. A Paper Read Before the Cheltenham Anglo-Israel Association, on the 25th September, 1880* (London: W.H. Guest, 1880), 5; Yeatman, *Shemetic Origin*, 19-22.

[110]John S. Haller, Jr., "Concepts of Race Inferiority in Nineteenth-Century Anthropology," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 25 (January 1970): 41-42.

Ethiopian, and Malayan. Blumenbach, in fact, considered the American and Malayan groups to be only transitional phases and thus of secondary importance. The American represented the phase between the Caucasian and Mongolian while the Malayan lay between the Caucasian and Ethiopian. In essence then, Blumenbach's division of five was in reality a division into three great races and two intermediate stages. By the mid-nineteenth century nearly every anthropologist accepted Blumenbach's division as truth. The scientific community, then, accepted a division of humanity which more or less reflected the popular conception of the three races.[111] Here again, British-Israelites could argue that the Hebrews and the English were both members of the great Caucasian race, since neither could be fairly included among the others. On strict classification grounds, British-Israelites stood firm. The Israelites and the English were both Caucasians, and thus there was nothing in contemporary racial classification which formed an objection to their identity. Of course, the Caucasian race was divided into numerous families, most vigorously into the Aryan and the Semitic. The foundation for this division, however, rested primarily on language. Identity and other authors, as has been seen, had effectively called even this foundation into doubt.

Asserting that the Hebrews and the British both belonged to the Caucasian race, however, did little to identify the two peoples outside removing the most basic of objections. Positive ethnological tools and methods would also need to be employed to show that racial affinity was not only loosely possible but highly probable. One of the earliest

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[111]For the Biblical basis of Blumenbach's division of races see Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 26.

of nineteenth-century methods of racial classification was phrenology, begun by Franz Joseph Gall in about 1800. In the first half of the century phrenology was a widely practiced method of determining racial characteristics, primarily by measuring the bumps on the surface of the skull and relating these to the size of different areas of the brain.[112] It also relied on the ascription of different moral characteristics to the minds of different races.[113] Phrenology offered a solid link between biology and the newly-developed Comtean sociology by endeavoring to explain human activities and qualities through physically inherited characteristics. In the hands of charlatans, it also offered up extreme abuses. Even in the hands of its most sober advocates phrenology was hardly an exact science. The standards and measurements used by phrenologists were generally shaped to confirm, rather than to arrive at, conclusions concerning the races.[114] As phrenology was one of the earliest methods used in racial science, so was it the earliest ethnographic tool of British-Israelites. It was, it will be remembered, John Wilson's chosen profession and the inspirational force behind his quest for the lost tribes. Wilson, like most phrenologists, used its power to substantiate already existing opinions, in his case Divine revelation. Wilson's biblical and scientific study had convinced him that true scientific knowledge always confirmed the word of God. "No branch of science with which I am acquainted," he declared, "has this tendency more than Phrenology, when rightly under-

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[112]David De Giustino, *Conquest of the Mind: Phrenology and Victorian Social Thought* (London: Croom Helm, 1975).

[113]Roger Cooter, *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science*, 259; Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 29; Stepan, *Idea of Race in Science*, 23-28.

[114]Haller, "Concepts of Race Inferiority," 44-45.

stood."[115] Israel's mind had been shaped by God for its special mission, and thus an analysis of the Anglo-Saxon mind through phrenological methods could satisfactorily identify the two. Wilson made a careful study of the moral characteristics of both the people of Israel and those of modern Europe (especially the Saxons) and found them identical. Convinced that such qualities were the products of the mind, he considered them solid clues to character and identity of races. Phrenology thus supplied the earliest ethnological backbone of the Identity.[116]

The years of rapid spread of British-Israelism, however, also saw the great demise of phrenology, at least in its original forms. The idea of measuring the body (especially the head) as means of racial determination, though, did not disappear. Anthropometry of various forms, including the facial angle and cephalic indices, continued to carry weight in numerous scientific circles in the Western world.[117] Ripley's *Races of Europe* (1899), in fact, was based almost solely on cranial measurements. "The shape of the human head," he reports, "by which we mean the general proportions of length, breadth, and height, irrespective of the "bumps" of the phrenologist--is one of the best available tests of race known."[118] British-Israelites were also able to incorporate at least the rudest of craniological conclusions. Sylvester, in *Heir to the World* (1876) devoted her entire third

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[115]Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin*, 3rd American ed., 230. Wilson allowed for the fact that phrenology, like most good things, had been greatly abused, "still this should not prevent its legitimate use." Ibid., 231.

[116]de Verdon, *The Veil Lifted From All Nations*, 44.

[117]Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1981).

[118]Ripley, *Races of Europe*, 37; Lorimer, "Theoretical Racism," 421-22.

chapter to the "Skull and Language," including a plate showing the differences between the "Ethiopian," "Caucasian," and "Mongolian" cranium. Both the Hebrews and Anglo-Saxons she concludes, belonged to the Caucasian variety.[119] Major-General Rainey recalled the American phrenologist Samuel Morton's posthumous *Catalogue of Human Crania* (1857). Morton determines in this work, Rainey reports, "that the British race comes nearer the Jew than any other Caucasian people in brain capacity."[120] Even an early article on "Anglo-Israel" in the *Hebrew Christian Witness* expressed that, "the head of the Jew is so remarkably like that of an Englishman . . . There is a difference between them correspondent to the difference of character in the two peoples; but, as compared with the other races of mankind, they are the same both in form and size."[121] Even the shape and size of the nose did not escape the ingenious methods of British-Israel anthropometrists, who claimed that this was now considered by the students of "the comparatively new science" of biological anthropology to be "the best racial test or index--more reliable than either the head or the colour."[122] Anthropometric evidence of any shade or any substance, no matter how small, became fodder for British-Israel adherents.

Cultural anthropology also offered suggestive correlatives. In the first half of the century, and even later in amateur anthropological circles, cultural affinities were used to

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[119]Sylvester, *Heir of the World*, chapter 3.

[120]Rainey, *Distribution of Shem, Ham, and Japheth*, 5-6.

[121]Excerpted in the *Banner of Israel* 32 (July 14 1909).

[122]*The Messenger* 7 (May 1892): 150.

signal potential racial relationships.[123] British-Israelites, in turn, examined customs and religious practices of cultures, and the etymological roots of ethnic names to show links between the Anglo-Saxon race and the Hebrews. Thomas C. Balmer suggested that several common religious and legal practices of the Anglo-Saxons and the Hebrews could be found in the pages of Bede's and Sharon Turner's writings. Punishments for petty crimes and adultery, and the method of dividing the land among the people were nearly identical in both cultures. Anglo-Saxon feasts and fasts resembled those of the Israelites and, as Sharon Turner noted, "the name appropriated to the Deity by the Saxons is not equaled by any other, except his most venerated Hebrew appellation."[124] Wilson, Savile, and Milner, among others, explained that the national traditions told to Herodotus by the Goths, including monotheism and mention of a deity or leader Zalmoxis (*Sar-mosis*, "the leader Moses") strongly resembled the story of Israel.[125] Gawler made a similar case for the ancient national history of the Scythians.[126] In looking to the ancient British religious practices, particularly to the Druids, a number of authors, British-Israelites explained, saw

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[123]Lorimer, "Theoretical Racism," 415; Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, chapter 3. Stocking suggests that by the second half of the century this method came under increasing doubt. Similarities of cultures were found in places so far afield that there was little chance of racial affinity. Such difficulties, he concedes, did not inhibit the imaginations of amateurs including those "men tracing the lost tribes of Israel" (102).

[124]Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 1: 532; quoted in Balmer, *The Israelitish Origin of the Anglo-Saxons*, 50-55.

[125]Herodotus, iv. 94-95; Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin*, 3rd American ed., 126; Savile, *Are We Israelites*, 44-45; Oxonian, *Israel's Wanderings*, 70.

[126]Herodotus, iv. 5-7; Gawler, "Appendix--What the Scythians Said to Herodotus at the Port of Borythenes," *Dan the Pioneer*, 37-40.

close resemblances.[127] "So near is the resemblance between the Druidical religion of Britain and the Patriarchal religion of the Hebrews," wrote Charles Hulbert in 1826, "that we hesitate not to pronounce their origin the same."[128] Bringing this implication to its conclusion, John Wellwood explained that, "Scottish religion has always been of a Jewish cast. . . . in our Sabbath, such as it was of old, and even within living memory, the best evidence that we are the lost ten tribes is to be found."[129]

Etymological analysis of racial names was a mainstay of British-Israel ethnology. The term "Scythian" Gawler indicates, citing Philip Smith's *Ancient History of the East*, simply denotes a nomadic people or wanderers, which the disinherited Israelites surely were. Moreover, he continued, the original name of the Scythians in Greek was pro-

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[127]The antiquarian Robert Weaver (1773-1852) believed that many of the ancient stone monuments in Britain were of Israel-Phoenician origin. In the same year that Wilson published *Our Israelitish Origin*, Weaver postulated that the Druids of Britain were the descendants of Phoenician colonists. Before their migration to the British Isels, he continued, these Phoenicians had been heavily influenced by the idolatrous Israelites in Palestine. While Weaver makes no claim as to an Israelitish racial origin for the British, he does connect them culturally through ancient religious practices. Weaver, *Monumenta Antiqua: or, The Stone Monuments of Antiquity yet Remaining in the British Isles, Particularly as Illustrated by Scripture* (London: J. B. Nichols & Son, 1840).

[128]Charles Hulbert, *The Religions of Britain: or, a View of its Various Christian Denominations: The Tenets, Ceremonies, &c. of the Ancient Druids* (Shrewsbury: The Author, 1826); also George Smith, *The History of the Religion of Ancient Britain*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1865), chap 2; *Cassell's History of England* (London: Cassell, 1903), vol. 1.; Griffith, *The Welsh Question and Druidism*, 3rd ed. (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1887); Major John Samuels, *The British Church. A Paper Read Before the Church Defence Association, Llanfairfechan, Garnarvonshire* (Dover: St. George's Press, 1910).

[129]Wellwood, *Norman Macleod*, Famous Scots Series (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1897), 118; quoted in, *Banner of Israel* 30 (February 7 1906), 73.

nounced Skuthai which has no independent meaning in the Greek language; "but if I find a language in which such a word has a meaning which indicates wandering, I have grounds for assuming that the people to whom that language belongs are the owners or originators of the name. In Hebrew S'cot means 'booths' (Genesis xxxii. 17) or temporary dwellings, such as gipsies would use, and the dwellers in them would be . . . Succothites."[130] The Skuthai, then, possessed a Hebrew name which indicated their dispossessed and nomadic state. Similar etymological methods were suggested concerning the Sacæ and the Goths. 'Sacæ' was nothing more, Gawler contends, than a corruption of 'Esakska', a name of a rebellious people found on the Nineveh marbles, or 'House of Isaac' by which the Israelites had been known in their own land. According to the Jewish writer M. Sailman, the ten tribes moved into Tartary and "'took the name *Gauthei*,' because, he says, they were very jealous of the glory of God."[131] The mutation of 'Gauthei' to 'Goth' was obviously quite simple. The Goths and the Sacæ were ethnologically, according to numerous scholars, the same people.[132] This use of names as a means of

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[130]Gawler, *Our Scythian Ancestors*, 10. For another association of the Hebrew word "Succoth" with the Israelites, Gawler quoted a Dr. Brugsch writing in *The Jewish Chronicle* (London), 21 January 1876. Brugsch mentioned an area of Egypt called the "district of Succoth" where the Israelites were concentrated and maintained that the name was of Hebrew origin.

[131]Ibid., 6, 8. Also Rev. M. Sailman, *The Researches in the East: or, An Important Account of the Ten Tribes of Israel* (London: E. Justins, 1818), 25.

[132]British Israelites referred to Alexander Del Mar's conclusion to this effect. "It has been assumed herein," he writes, "that the Getæ, the Sacæ and the Goths are the same people. . . . Saca, Sacæ, Saxæ, and Scythi, or Scythians are likewise variants of one word, which in this case is taken from the name of the Solar God, Ies-saca [British-Israelites suggested the patriarch I-saac]. That the Getæ and the Sacæ were the same people is established by numerous evidences and corroborated by Buchanan, Rubeck, Pinkerton, Jamieson, Tod, Princeps, and other Orientalists." He further states that "the terms Goths,

Identity, while inconclusive, was not out of context for its time. "To build an ethnographical theory upon a mere identity of names is at all times, it must be allowed, a dangerous proceeding," Rawlinson stated in his *History of Herodotus.* "Yet still," he continued, "identity of name, even alone, is an argument which requires to be met, and which, unless met by positive objections, establishes a presumption in favour of connection of race."[133] Correlating the tribe of Dan with the Danai, Tuatha de Danaan, and Danes, the Beth-Khumri with the Gimiri and Welsh Kymry, the Belgæ with the Hebrew words 'Bal' and 'goi' meaning people or worshippers of Bal, which the idolatrous Hebrews certainly were, and even the generic term British with the words for 'covenant' (B'rith) and 'man' (ish) was an attractive, if often disputed, method of establish ethnological links between Hebrews and Britons.

The connection between British-Israelism and the contemporary ethnological debates was more direct, however, than the simple parallelism of ideas and the incorporation of methods. The British-Israel theory received the attention of established anthropological scholars. And though the greater number of these dismissed the theory as unsound, nevertheless, they evidently felt it necessary to allow for a fair hearing of its arguments and to supply for a suitable rebuttal. In 1873 the explorer and anthropologist Richard Burton began the London Anthropological Association. The members of the Association had split from the Anthropological Institute (founded in 1871) out of a desire to focus more

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Jutes, Angles, Saxons, Salic Franks and Northmen are convertible." Del Mar, *Ancient Britain in the Light of Modern Archaeological Discoveries*, 129, 141.

[133]George Rawlinson, M.A., *History of Herodotus. A New English Edition, Edited with Copious Notes and Appendices*, 4th ed., (London: John Murray, 1880), 1: 180-81.

clearly on the issues of race and psychology rather than on the prehistoric archaeology which dominated the new Institute. In November 1873 the Association heard a paper from A. L. Lewis entitled "The Alleged Identification of the English Nation With the 'Lost House of Israel.'" Lewis was decidedly against the Identity, pronouncing it "ridiculous in the eyes of Anthropologists."[134] It was, however, the paper's second reading, having attracted, Lewis conceded, "considerable interest when read before a crowded section of the British Association at Brighton."[135] The theory, evidently, required the repeated attention of trained anthropologists since the same society allocated even more of its time two years later to C. O. Groom Napier to advocate the Identity. On April 9, 1875, he spoke before a well-attended Association meeting in support of the identification of Israel with the British. Prior to its presentation, Napier submitted the paper to the late president of the Association, Dr. John Beddoe, who read it and made a number of "suggestive hints."[136] Though anthropologists often rejected the theory they could not afford to completely ignore it. The Identity's use of anthropological and ethnological concepts had appealed to the popular mind, perhaps to a greater extend than did the conclusions proffered by official scientific organizations. *Chambers' Encyclopedia* (1887) reported that:

> in spite of the new, real knowledge as to races, [the British-Israel theory] has now more votaries than ever. "There is indeed no doubt," says Dr. Taylor, "that this ab-

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[134]*Anthropologia: In Which Are Included the Proceedings of the London Anthropological Society* 1 (1873): 193.

[135]Ibid., 185.

[136]Napier's paper was printed in *Leading the Nation to Glory* 1 (1875): 137-47; 149-60; 161-63.

> ject nonsense has a far larger circulation today than all the rational ethnology published in England."[137]

The Identity understandably had a larger impact on public racial conceptions than it did on professional ethnology. That it also seemed able to make greater inroads into popular racial thought than could the professional anthropologists was perhaps because of the ethnological uncertainty found throughout the professional literature of the period. It could, with relative ease, present itself in the guise of solid ethnology, using many of the names, methods, and conclusions of the foremost scholars to make its points. It was never able to contend for serious consideration by the bulk of professional ethnologists, yet to a British public in eager search of its origins, the Identity did present itself successfully as a scientifically-based alternative to the more formally academic, though less inspiring, conclusions of the professionals.

**Conclusion**

Even after more than fifty years of gathering and connecting evidence from history, ethnology, philology, craniology, geography, geology, pyramidology, astronomy and antiquarianism Identity leaders were forced to admit that "we do not say that these sciences present a chain of evidence which no one can miss. On the contrary, we admit its likeness to 'crazy-patchwork'; *but again*, its cumulated force renders it respectable, not to say irresistible."[138] They also tried to make it clear that if science could not positively prove

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[137]*Chambers' Encyclopaedia: A Dictionary of Human Knowledge*, new ed. (London: W. & R. Chambers, 1888); quoted in, "Chamber's New Encyclopedia on Our Identity," *Banner of Israel* 12 (1 August 1888): 308.

[138]Landseer MacKenzie, *Libra. An Attempt to Weigh the Character and Value of British-Israel Identity Evidence* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1913), 27.

the British descent from Israel, neither had it conclusively disproved it. If scientific evidence admitted only the possibility of the identity of the two peoples, Britain's custody of all the prophetic marks of Israel confirmed it. "We Anglo-Israelites," George Walsh explained,

> affirm that the British, and the British only, are the possessors of all these distinguishing marks; and, fortunately, ethnologists, historians, and philologists are unable to refute it by any evidence of an opposite character, for the apparent difficulties, which confront the Anglo-Israelite, with regard to the history, mixture of race and language of the people of these Isles, and which at first sight seem so formidable, vanish completely upon examination, and afford so many additional confirmations of the truth of this theory.[139]

Though there was a scientific element to the theory, British-Israelism was certainly not a *scientifically-based* theory. Science simply bestowed "additional confirmations" to a theory held on faith. It is not surprising, then, that it was rejected by most mainstream scientific and scholarly communities. The short entry on the theory in the American edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1895) simply stated that the theory "sets at defiance all ethnological and linguistic evidence."[140]

The theory was a sentiment of imperial and racial pride which used the language and concepts of religion and wrapped itself in the clothes of scientific and secular proof. But rather than this fact making the theory obscure and out of step with its time, it only set it on a surer footing. The same "scientific spirit" which seemed to characterize Victorian

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[139]George Nelson Walsh, *Israel: Where is She Now? And What is Her Mission? Being a Lecture Delivered in St. George's Schools, Sheffield, April 12th, 1888* (Sheffield: George Slater, 1888), 22.

[140]*American Revisions and Additions to the Encyclopædia Britannica (9th ed.): A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature*, 1895 ed., s.v. "Anglo-Israelite Theory."

society and inspired British-Israelites to seek and produce historical and scientific evidence also had well-recognized limitations. Readers of London's *Daily Telegraph* found themselves confronted with this straight on. "Do we not," it asked in 1901, "overrate the extent to which the scientific spirit has pervaded society? It was stated on good authority, not long ago, that a weekly publication [*Banner of Israel*], devoted mainly to the proof that the British people were the ten lost tribes of Israel, had more readers by far than all the scientific journals and serials put together."[141] Aside from its contentions on the popularity of the theory, the implication here is somewhat inaccurate. The Identity did not either exist outside of or reject the scientific spirit of which the paper speaks; it simply addressed that spirit on a more popular, and consequently less academic and professional, level. Even many of its critics conceded that mere scoff could not dispose of the theory since it had been "gravely argued out and supported by a mass of 'evidence.'" "Let us not be alarmed," this opponent consoled his readers, "at the show of learning and research brought to bear on us at the quotations and references, but let us--it is worth while, surely--calmly and thoroughly examine the arguments on which such astounding conclusions are founded."[142] British-Israel's scientific arguments deserved at least the merit of examination rather than a simple off-hand dismissal if only because they presented significantly strong prima facie scientific case.

Moreover, and more importantly, the most "mainstream" of Victorian history, philology, and ethnology also had racial and imperial assumptions as well as religious opin-

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[141]"Science Notes," *Daily Telegraph* (London), 26 November 1901.

[142]Philalethes, *The Israel of God*, 7.

ions at their core. Victorian history often took for granted the Providence of God in the course of human affairs and the ultimate triumph of Anglo-Saxon institutions and ideas. For many years philologists sought the original human tongue bestowed upon man at the moment of creation, and were sometimes driven to establish their own national language as a contender for the title.[143] Philology also served as the basis for the great Aryan-Semitic divide which had numerous implications for religious and racial theory. Ethnology as well, especially in the classification of the races and the monogenesis-polygenesis debates of mid-century, worked from numerous religious suppositions. The main supposition and aim of nineteenth-century racial science, the establishment of the inequality of the races, would also end up justifying "the new colonial policies as well as the separation of the races. It was a circular proof seeking to justify what nearly everyone already accepted as true."[144] British-Israelism found a comfortable place within this climate. It, too, worked to prove pre-suppositions based upon religious opinions, racial prejudice, and imperial confidence. The fact that it sought to do so in harmony with science only marks it more clearly as a product of its time and goes far to explain its extensive popular appeal.

Finally, the secular and scientific aspect of British-Israelism also illustrates one of the main contentions of this dissertation, namely, that Britain's imperial experience engendered quests for racial and imperial identities (i.e. British-Israel) based not, primarily, on

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[143]Stratton, in his *Affinity of the Hebrew Language and the Celtic*, admits that his original study of Gaelic had been prompted by "a strong feeling of nationality" (p. 5). He suggests that the Celtic has a perfectly defensible claim of being older than the Hebrew and thus potentially the language of Paradise as described in the Bible (pp. 58-59).

[144]Haller, "Concepts of Race Inferiority," 51.

the concept of the Other. The search for the Anglo-Saxon's origins pervaded nineteenth-century history, philology, and anthropology. While there is no doubt that Victorian ethnology eagerly sought to establish that non-Anglo-Saxons, particularly the non-Europeans, were inferior, foreign, and dangerous, it also attempted to discover the racial roots for the Anglo-Saxon's genius. In each discipline significant energy was devoted to the discovery of particular ancestors whether the Sakai, Goths, Celtæ, or more generally the Aryans to explain the race's greatness. That the British-Israelites suggested the lost Hebrews was certainly an original position, but unique only in its specific focus rather than in fundamental motivations or goals.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## THE RELIGION OF ELECTION: SCRIPTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

In tandem with its racial-imperial foundation, the Identity was solidly secured in and dependent upon religious concepts and considerations. These two spheres, however, were never entirely separate. The former, in fact, heavily informed the latter and defined its theological focus, interpretations, and methodology. Moreover the scope of British-Israelism's concern for theological matters was limited. Being neither a sect nor a cult, the Identity did not concern itself with modifying the most basic of Protestant Christian doctrines, particularly those that touched upon the nature of God or the salvation of the soul. Its mainly Protestant adherents remained firmly committed to their congregations with a number of established ministers preaching the Identity from their pulpits. Fundamentals of Protestant theology went unchallenged and generally unaddressed. The only theological realm over which British-Israel authors and leaders claimed any authority was in the interpretation of prophecy. "The Anglo-Saxon Israel theory neither destroys or [sic] introduces any new principle," they explained, "but discovers and applies that which had long been hidden."[1] The reason for this was that Biblical prophecy, particularly that dealing with Israel, held the most striking imperial implications whereas other more basic theological issues did not. In fact, theologically, British-Israelism was marketed not as a

[1]Catherine R. Clements, *Our Marvellous Empire* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1914), 14.

step towards personal salvation but as the indispensable key to prophecy. Imperial aspirations and racial pride, however, directed both the choice of prophetic passages and the method of their interpretation. Identity theologians approached prophecy confident in its application to British domestic and imperial history. It was the race's destiny, not theological truth, which motivated and directed the religious component of British-Israel.

This chapter will concentrate on the religious aspect of British-Israelism. Since it is not the purpose of this dissertation to assess the validity of British-Israel's contentions, this chapter will not attempt a theological analysis. Rather, it will investigate the use of religious concepts by the British-Israel movement and how these reflected the larger religious, and secular, mind-set. Religious thought played an ambiguous role in the movement. Though the Identity was completely dependent upon the Biblical ideas of the election of Israel and the Providence of God, the Identity was not founded upon religious principles. Religion supplied the parameters and basic concepts of the theory, but its foundation was racial and imperial pride. This is not to say that those who adopted the theory were irreligious. On the contrary, by all accounts they were earnest and devout Christians. The Identity, however, contributed nothing fundamental to religious doctrine. Its main appeal, as the novelist G. A. Birmingham pointed out, was to those "who feel the need of some extra belief, a faith of supererogation."[2] This extra belief was that of racial election and its resulting imperial promise. These informed every theological position taken and pronouncement made by the movement. British-Israelism's millennialist ideas, its commitment to the literal rendering of the prophetic books, and its interpretation of the

[2]Birmingham, *The Lost Tribes*, 65.

Christian mandate all depended upon and were shaped by its absolute devotion to the race and the empire. This relationship is the focus of this chapter. Though religious concepts and feelings were indispensable to the movement, to understand British-Israelism purely or even primarily as a religious theory is to greatly misunderstand its nature.

**British-Israel and the Millennium**

The most recent study of the British-Israel movement interprets it wholly as a modern-day form of millennialism. Richard Virr, in his 1980 dissertation, contends that "millennialism alone gave to British-Israel its motivating force. Therefore, British-Israel is properly understood as an expression of the millennial hope."[3] Virr argues that British-Israelism simply extended the tradition of seventeenth and eighteenth-century millenarian movements into the late-nineteenth century.[4] The points of resemblance between the Identity and earlier forms of millennial hope are indeed many. British-Israel's belief in the imminent thousand-year reign of Christ, its assertion of and obsession with an elect nation, and its dependence upon Bible prophecy as a guide to the affairs of state do seem to place it within the English millenarian tradition since the Reformation. Likewise, the

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[3]Virr, "British-Israel: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Millennialism," viii.

[4]For the purpose of considering Virr's argument some definition of the terms millennialism and millenarianism is in order. Both refer to the belief in a future thousand-year reign of Christ on earth in the latter days. A distinction between the two, however, has been suggested by Harrison in his work *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780-1850*, 5-6. Harrison argues that while "millennialism" refers simply to the belief in the millennium, the term "millenarian" most ably describes the emotional movements that advocated its imminent approach. Harrison indicates that while millennialism was a belief which many rational clergy and scholars adopted in their interpretation of prophecy, millenarians were often apocalyptic and irrational in their preaching. Harrison, however, does admit that an absolute distinction between the two is impossible. Virr makes no distinction between them and thus an analysis of his thesis requires that millennialism and millenarianism be understood as essentially the same doctrine.

national pride which permeates every aspect of British-Israelism appears to strengthen this conclusion as it has been argued by many scholars that a close relationship exists between millennialism and nationalism. By approaching the Identity as a religious movement rather than a racial-imperial one, Virr has ample reason to conclude that the theory simply represents a more recent outgrowth of a much older theological tradition. His error lies not in the reasoning which led him to this conclusion so much as it is in his premise concerning the fundamental religious nature of the movement.

On its face, the millennialist interpretation of British-Israelism seems plausible not to say inescapable. Three aspects of it, in particular, support the notion that the primary inspirational force behind the theory was millennial enthusiasm. First, the theory's focus on the Hebrews as an elect nation reflects a similar tenet found in other millenarian movements. The ideas that the Jews or the Israelites (or both) had to be gathered in prior to the last days, and that they would be instrumental in ushering in Christ's kingdom were commonly accepted in millennial circles. Second, the suggested close relationship between millenarian prophecy and nascent nationalism appears to encompass and explain the emotional intensity of British-Israelism. Finally, the concept of a glorious, temporal, and imminent reign of Christ is undoubtedly one of British-Israel's contentions, and it is certainly possible to find millennial predictions throughout Identity literature. Taken together these three elements seem to confirm Virr's thesis. However, closer examination of each one, as well as a discussion of the role which each played in the Identity as a whole, shows that a different conclusion must be drawn. What will be suggested is that while millennial ideas certainly played an important part in the British-Israel theory, the

Identity cannot be truly described as a millenarian movement since it was not driven by millennial hopes *per se* but by an imperial devotion dressed up in the language of the millennium. When British-Israelism is viewed as an imperial and racialist movement, as advocated by this dissertation, its millennial aspect appears more functional than theological. Its main purpose was to confirm the role and security of the Anglo-Saxon race and empire rather than to complete any cosmological or eschatological doctrine.

There has been a long and close relationship between the search for the lost tribes and idea of the approaching millennium. According to the most orthodox of millennial ideas dating back at least to the seventeenth century, the millennium would arrive only after "all Israel" converted to Christianity and were gathered together in the land of their fathers. This required the discovery of the missing tribes since the modern Jews represented, at best, only one-twelfth of "all Israel".[5] The lost tribes held great importance for the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. Their reappearance would signal that the time was near at hand. A similar belief existed outside Christian circles in Jewish messianic thought. The return of their kinsfolk would herald the near arrival of the messiah, and until very recent times Jewish religious services were full of pleas for the return of the lost tribes. In the mid-seventeenth-century, in fact, Christian millennialism became closely intertwined with Jewish messianism with leading authors of both movements keeping in close contact. In both traditions the idea was the same. Whether it was the Savior's first or second coming, the lost tribes of Israel were to share in his glorious reign and therefore needed to be found.

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[5]Richard H. Popkin, "The Lost Tribes, the Caraites, and the English Millenarians," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 37 (Autumn 1986): 213-14.

The clearest and most influential expression of this intellectual cooperation between English millenarians and Jewish messianics was the work of the Dutch rabbi, Menasseh ben Israel. In the late 1640s he received news that the Portuguese explorer, Antonio de Montezinos, had discovered part of lost Israel in the American Indians. Menasseh took an immediate interest in this discovery, but, it seems, his enthusiasm initially centered on the good news that at least a segment of his race had been found, rather than on any potential messianic implications. English millenarians, however, wasted no time drawing the larger eschatological conclusions. A number of works soon appeared, the best known being Thomas Thorowgood's *Jewes in America, or Probabilities that the Americans are of that Race* (1650), proclaiming that this discovery of lost Israel meant that end times were close at hand.[6] In the next few months, Menasseh embraced these conclusions and produced a ninety-page work, *The Hope of Israel.* In this work he points to a number of contemporary "signs", including the discovery of Israel in America, to show that the time of Jewish redemption was at hand. *The Hope of Israel* was an immediate success in England, not the least because Menasseh had dedicated it to the Revolutionary government and made it clear that England was to play a paramount role in the Divine plan to restore the Jews to Palestine. So influential was this work that government officials (including Oliver Cromwell) and leading English millenarians kept in close contact with Menasseh and eagerly sought his advice, especially on the issue of readmitting Jews into England. Two theological considerations greatly influenced Cromwell's

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[6]R. H. Popkin, "Jewish Messianism and Christian Millenarianism," in *Culture and Politics From Puritanism to the Enlightenment*, ed. Perez Zagorin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 71-4.

decision to allow Jews back into the country. First, for Christian millenarians, the Jews needed to be converted before the Christ's arrival, therefore readmission would, it was hoped, increase the potential for conversion. If Jews could live peacefully among English Christians they would undoubtedly, so it was believed, adopt their faith. Second, for both millenarians and Jewish messianics, the Hebrews needed to be gathered into Palestine from "all the corners of the Earth," including England and America. If no Jews existed in England (officially, at least), then the arrival of the millennium would be inhibited. It was impossible, then, to remove consideration of the Hebrews, both the Jews and the lost tribes, from millennial thought.

Richard H. Popkin, who has explored the relationship between English millenarianism and Jewish messianism more fully than anyone else, traces the interaction between these two intellectual strains from the seventeenth-century up until the emergence of Zionism and the Balfour declaration.[7] He contends that though the two ideas have modified over time, their motivating forces remained essentially the same. Britain's interest in establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine was a direct outgrowth, rather than a reemergence, of British millenarianism. In fact, Popkin does include the British-Israel movement within this whole dynamic. Like Virr, he interprets the British-Israelites as modern millenarians. Identity writers, it is true, focused on the discovery of the lost tribes of Israel and did address its implications on the arrival of the millennium. This, however, was not of interest to millenarians alone but was discussed by the most conservative of Angli-

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[7]R. H. Popkin, ed., "Introduction," in *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought, 1650-1800: The Clark Library Lectures 1981-1982* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988),10-11.

can scholars.[8] Popkin's misunderstanding of the British-Israel position on the Jews, Palestine, and the millennium, however, leads him to problematic conclusions . British-Israelites did not, as he indicates, consider themselves "the pure or true Jews in contrast with the decrepit remnant of the biological descendants of ancient Palestine."[9] They did not see themselves as Jews at all but as their relations. Furthermore, the fulfillment of the British-Israel millennial hopes could not, as Popkin claims, take place "without stiff-necked actual Jews."[10] British-Israelites looked forward to the restoration of the Jews to Palestine at British hands with great impatience. Furthermore, the idea of the millennium in British-Israel thought was never completely clear. Though they affirmed the concept of a millennial age, they spent little time, far less than seventeenth-century or later millenarians, attempting to assess the date of its arrival or its nature.[11] There is enough con-

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[8]On November 11, 1896, the physician Dr. Herbert Aldersmith addressed the President, Court of Governors, and Members of Sion College, London on this very issue. Aldersmith, *The Great Distinction Between the "House of Judah" (Jews) and the "House of Israel" in These "Latter Days"*, 3rd. ed. (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1898). He had been invited to speak to them as part of a larger lecture series. The renowned theologian David S. Margoliouth was invited to respond to him. See, *Sion College Court Register, 1894-1906*, 94. According to that year's report, the lecture series of that year was a success with all the lectures being "animated and to the point." *Report to the Fellows of Sion College. By the Court of Governors. In Easter Week, 8th April, 1897*, 2. In a personal interview with Stephen Gregory, Librarian of Sion College Library on September 8, 1994, this author was informed that Sion College has always been theologically conservative and orthodox.

[9]Popkin, "Jewish Messianism and Christian Millenarianism," 71-72.

[10]Ibid., 85-86.

[11]Though British-Israelites did propose certain dates for the arrival of the millennium, especially 1882 and 1917, they shied away from making apocalyptic descriptions of its arrival. Even these dates were offered with great caution. By the 1880s, moreover, millennial chronology had entered mainstream Christian thought and was no longer limited to outspoken millenarian movements. See H. Grattan Guinness, *Light for the Last*

nection between English millenarianism and the search for the lost tribes to lead historians to place British-Israelism, superficially considered, squarely within the millenarian tradition. But the motivation of earlier millenarians in discovering the lost tribes was to hasten the arrival of the millennium. It made no difference who the tribes were, the Caraite Jews of central Asia or the American Indians, so long as they were found. British-Israelism, however, was not a search for the lost tribes for theological reasons. British-Israelites found them in the Anglo-Saxon race for reasons of racial identity alone; the millennial implications of this remained secondary and supplementary at all times. When the Identity is viewed on its own terms, it becomes clear that millennial thought played an important, but far from the defining, role in its makeup.

Secondly, even taking British-Israelism for a racial and nationalist movement does not by itself exclude the possibility of it being millennialist at the core. In modern scholarship nationalist feelings have been seen as intertwined with millenarian ideas.[12] Millennialism has been described as a nascent form and predecessor of nationalism, with the emphasis on the election of a particular people resting at the center of both. Millennial

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*Days* (1886). Also, this author has found only one British-Israel work dedicated to the exposition of the millennial age. Even here, however, there is little more than a repetition of standard Christian ideas of the reign of Christ and his saints. Surgeon-General J. M. Grant, *The Origin, Progress, and Establishment of the Kingdom of God in the World* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1888).

[12]Elie Kedoudrie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson, 1960); idem, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1971); Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959); Peter Worsley, *The Third World* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1964). For a survey of this kind of literature see Anthony D. S. Smith, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 14-22.

ideas, it has been argued, have been found in emerging colonial countries in Asia and Africa where a true concept of the "nation" had not been given ample opportunity to develop. These religious and mystical ideas gradually coalesce into a secular form of nationalism much as the millennialist ideas of medieval and early-modern Europe led to the western nationalism of the modern age. British-Israelism, undoubtedly, was fraught with the concept of national, more particularly racial, election. Since it also contained ideas on the millennium, it has been interpreted as an example of this millennial-nationalist process.[13] The whole premise of a connection between millennialism and nationalism, however, has been called into doubt by Anthony D. Smith in his *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. Smith admits that a similarity of concepts and language exists between the two movements but denies that the one leads directly to the other and, in fact, points out areas where the two strains of thought are actually incompatible.[14] Nationalism generally appeals to a more educated class than does millennialism, which depends usually on social discontent. Furthermore, nationalism emphasizes ethnic and cultural cohesion while millennialists look towards a collective of believers generally without regard to ethnic origin: "the latter aim for a brotherhood among the elect who believe in the kingdom and its coming, whereas nationalists seek to unite people of the same culture into a single territorial unit."[15] Nationalists look to history and racial descent as justification for their claims while millennialists reject the past in anxious hope that all will be swept away

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[13]Virr, "The Elect Nation and the Lost Tribes," chap in "British-Israel," 28-43.

[14]Smith, *Nationalism*, 22-30.

[15]Ibid., 26.

with Christ's advent. The chief difference between the movements, Smith concludes is, that millennialists "will have nothing to do with our world; it is innately corrupt and damned. Nationalists, on the other hand, accept the present dispensation, at least as a starting point."[16] On every issue, social appeal, ethnic cohesion, appeal to the past and racial descent, and the view of present time, British-Israelism reflects the nationalist viewpoint far more than the millennialist one.

Smith, an expert in nationalism and nationalist movements, relies on Yonina Talmon's definition and characterization of millennialism.[17] Appealing directly to Talmon does little to change conclusions regarding British-Israel's relation to millennialism. Talmon recognizes six characteristics of millennial movements, few of which can be applied comfortably to the Identity movement. First, millenarians view time as linear with its final consummation in the last days. While this is true of British-Israelism, so it is of much orthodox, especially evangelical, Christianity as well. Second, salvation is viewed as a terrestrial phenomenon with the heavenly city to appear here on earth and the establishment of a new social order. British-Israel is unclear on this point. For British-Israelites, the orthodox view on the transcendent salvation of the soul is unchanged. Moreover, though some concept of Christ's rule on earth certainly exists in British-Israel thought, there is no talk of an usurpation of the social order. Next, salvation for millennialists is collective but limited; the believers in the new kingdom are the chosen of God

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[16]Ibid., 28.

[17]Yonina Talmon, "Pursuit of the Millennium: The Relation Between Religious and Social Change," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 3 (1: 1962): 130-36; see Smith, *Nationalism*, 15.

and thus the saved. This was not so in British-Israelism. The Identity of the Anglo-Saxon race with the lost tribes of Israel had no bearing on salvation. Salvation remained equally open to all whether of Anglo-Saxon origin or not, and simply embracing the tenets of British-Israelism offered no assurance of salvation except for the possibility that it might lead to an acceptance of Christ. Fourth, millennialists deny the power of man to achieve salvation. Only God can usher in the millennial age and He alone can judge the saved and the damned. British-Israelites did accept this but, once again, this seems more reflective of Protestant theology in general, rather than a distinctive millennialist trait. Talmon further describes how most millenarians, in rejecting the efficacy and importance of human actions, actively resisted the present world and social order by refusing to pay taxes or join the armed services. British-Israelites partook of none of this; many of them having a vested interest in and ardently defending the social and economic status quo. Fifth, most millenarian movements were messianic, relying upon a savior or prophet to lead the believers into the new age. As has been seen, British-Israelites have no savior and no prophets, only leading authors. These however, were often questioned by other Identity thinkers so that the movement was more a collection of ideas from many voices than the doctrines of one or two teachers. Finally, millenarian movements relied on a hard-core of dedicated followers willing to reject their previous lives and beliefs for their cause or leader. British-Israelites were dedicated to the theory, no doubt, but none of them were asked to reject their previous faith. Most remained in their churches since there was no "British-Israel" sect for them to join. Though individual Identity authors such as Edward Hine and Robert Douglas had followers, these were devoted far more to

the ideas which these men espoused than to the men themselves. It is clear, then, that British-Israelism does not really conform to millenarian ideology, any more, at any rate, than orthodox Protestant Christianity. At this point, perhaps, Richard Brothers becomes important in understanding where Virr and others are led astray. Brothers and his movement fit well into the millenarian paradigm here described. If he is considered the founder of British-Israelism, as many contemporaries, modern-day authors, and Virr do, then the conclusion becomes inescapable that British-Israelism was fundamentally millennialist. Once Brothers is removed from a place of fundamental importance to the modern Identity theory, as he should be, then the millennialist interpretation of British-Israelism loses credibility.

It is, admittedly, almost impossible to read any British-Israel text and not have some sense that the author believes in the imminent second advent of Christ. For a time, very specific predictions were made as to when this event would take place. In the years prior to 1882, and especially in works on the Great Pyramid, adherents made clear exhortations that the reign of Christ would begin in or around the year 1882.[18] The prophecies found in the book of Daniel coupled with the measurements of the Great Pyramid were taken to be a chronological guide to the history of the world. British-Israelites focused especially on the passage leading from the Pyramid's entrance up to the central or

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[18]The popular evangelical preacher, H. Grattan Guinness, actively taught that not only was the end of the age fast approaching but that it was possible to use Bible chronology to calculate its date. "The conviction that we are living in days which have about them a character of finality deepens in the minds of thoughtful men," he wrote in 1886. Furthermore, he asserted that "there is a *science* of chronologic prophecy . . . if science be a knowledge of facts arranged in order and explained by law." *Light for the Last Days*, 3-4. See, "Henry Grattan Guinness," *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1910.

"King's" chamber and calculated that every "Pyramid inch" (equal to 1.001 British inches) was equivalent to one year. The point where the narrow ascending passage opens into what was termed the "grand gallery" was taken to be the year of Christ's birth, or the year 0. Taking this as a starting point, British Israelites attempted to calculate the time of the approaching end of the age. "The grand gallery length, exactly measured, is 1881.4 Pyramid inches," Philo-Israel explained, "showing that, calculating one Pyramid inch for a year, the dispensation of grace, in which we are now living, represented thereby, will come to an abrupt and sudden close, shown by the impending South wall, in May, 1882."[19] Not every British-Israelite was so confident as to the meaning of 1882. The Rev. Samuel Minton of Worcester College, Oxford, for example, believed that the date signified a closing of the present dispensation, or perhaps simply the beginning of "a new phase."[20] Most, however, believed that the year would nonetheless be momentous.[21]

The year 1882 came and went, of course, without Christ establishing his reign on earth. While the British-Israelites were not so dependent upon their millennial vision that they could not withstand this disappointment, they did refrain from making many specific predictions about the end of the age in latter years. It is not known if any British-Israelite

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[19]Philo-Israel, ed., "An Elementary Digest or Sketch of the Chief Facts and Teachings of the Great Pyramid," in *The Great Pyramid of Egypt. A Digest of the Great Pyramid Teaching Adapted to the Comprehension of the Unlearned and of the Unscientific* (London: W. H. Guest, 1879), 17.

[20]Rev. Samuel Minton, M.A., *The Great Pyramid: A Lecture* (London: Elliot Stock, 1880), 21.

[21]The adherent-turned-critic, Rev. Bourchier Wrey Savile, brought the entire issue of British-Israel prophetic chronology under scrutiny in his *Anglo-Israelism and the Great Pyramid* (1880).

was so despondent by the failure of 1882's millennial promise to have lost complete faith in the theory, though Bourchier Wrey Savile relates a conversation he had with "a leader among the 'Anglo-Israelites'" in which this unidentified man declared that he would "give the whole affair up" if 1882 did not hold the anticipated events.[22] One event of that year offered enough prophetic fulfillment, it seems, to have placated the larger number of British-Israelites. This event was the bombardment of Alexandria and the establishment of Egypt as a British protectorate. When the British army under Sir Garnet Wolseley defeated the Egyptian forces at Tel-el-Kebir and established British control over the Khedive of Egypt, British-Israelites took this to signify the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire.[23] The destruction of the Turk was seen as a necessary precondition of the reign of Christ. The extension of the British empire into the Land of the Pharaohs fulfilled the need for "a remarkable event" within the course of 1882.[24] For the most part, however, very little was said about the year 1882 after it had come and gone.

The foundation of British-Israelism, however, was far larger than this narrow millennial vision and for the next three decades the movement continued to grow despite the disappointment of 1882. From that point on, British-Israelites most often spoke of the

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[22]Savile, *Letter to a Friend, John Rowlands*, Appendix F., 32.

[23]Guinness also remarked upon the importance of the British bombardment of 1882. This date, he points out, was 1,260 years (one half the "seven times" of Daniel's prophecies) after the Islamic Hegira of A.D. 622. Thus the Islamic faith and the reign of the Turk had lived out its existence and would now enter into decline. *Light For the Last Days*, 281-82.

[24]Charles LaGrange, *The Great Pyramid By Modern Science*, 45-46; Henry Francis Gordon, *The Great Pyramid In, But Not OF Egypt: Its Claims to Be For a Sign and For a Witness Unto the Lord of Hosts in the Land of Egypt, as Announced in the Scriptures of His Holy Prophet Isaiah, B.C. 714* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1890), 39-42.

coming end of the age in the vague terms used by other evangelical preachers.[25] In asserting that the time of the end was at hand, Identity writers were careful to point out that this opinion was not fanatical or apocalyptic but had the "common consent of the Churches."[26] The end was indeed approaching; how short a time remained was left undetermined. Pinpoint accuracy, especially in light of the problems with 1882, was greatly downplayed. The important thing was that the time for the fulfillment of the promises made to Israel was rapidly drawing to a close. This idea is the key to the millennial doctrines of British-Israelism. The focus was not so much on the arrival of the millennium but on what this meant for the British race and its empire. Millennialism took on a distinctly imperial aspect. If Britain was not Israel, adherents lamented, then another nation must rise up before the end of the age and take from the British their wealth, their dominance and, most painfully, their empire. "Let us image for a moment," Philo-Israel suggested, "that we British, blessed as we are, are not Israelites at all, but only Gentile non-Israelites." In this case,

> the real Israel--the Ten Tribes--are sure to be raised up to take from us all our blessings. . . . Our Heathen Empire must go to the proper heirs--Israel. Our Gates we

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[25]In 1890, Colonel Senior chastised his fellow British-Israel writers who attempted to place the end of the dispensation in 1882. "We have on every occasion," he claimed, "endeavoured to show the fallacy of this statement on the grounds that, 'of that day and that hour knoweth no man.'" Senior believed the time was near at hand but that to try to ascertain the date was foolhardy. Most Identity writers headed his warning at least until the outbreak of the First World War. Senior, *The Great Pyramid of Geezeh in Egypt: Considered with Reference to Prophecy, History, Science, and Theology* (Glasgow: David Bryce and Son, 1890), 21.

[26]Caroline Pearse, *The Anglo-Israel Theory*, 3rd. ed. (London: Robert Banks & Son, [1900]), 12-13; Colonel George William Deane, *Britannia's Epiphany: Reconciliation of the Teaching of Christendom and British Israelism*. Foreword by Rev. George S. Lee (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1919), 52-3.

> must surrender to their owners--Israel. Our commerce and our wealth must be transferred to the coming Tribes of Israel. Our home will be invaded and broken up by other Gentile races, because we are NOT Israel . . . and our Colonial Empire--"the nation and company of nations"--must be Israel's but ours no longer. Who can endure even to contemplate the possibility of such terrible things as these, yet they are sure to occur if we be not Israel.[27]

For this to happen there must be time enough for the decay of Anglo-Saxon civilization and for another nation, presently unknown, to assume the role of greatness. The fact that the end was near at hand, and that, consequently, there was no time "for a race to spring up and dispossess the Anglo-Saxon races, step into their shoes, and assume all their prerogatives before [Christ] comes," not only added a proof as to the identity of the British as Israel but also afforded divine protection to the empire.[28] The millennium's primary role in British-Israel thought was to supply chronological security to the race and its global position. It was not, as Virr suggests, the driving force of the movement; it simply buttressed the racial and imperial foundations of the theory.

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[27]Philo-Israel, "What Need is There for Israel at All in These Latter Days," *Anglo-Israel Almanack for 1886*, 44-45; see also, "If Not Israel--What Then?" *Anglo-Israel Almanack for 1907*, 18; Protheroe Smith, *The Identity of Israel with the English and Kindred Races*, 16-17, Grace Isabel Berry, *Iscah: A Tale for the Times. Past, Present, and Future, Historical, Religious and Political* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1898), 167.

[28]Lawrence G. A. Roberts, *The Bible and the British Nation. Shewing the Position of the British Nation in Prophecy: A Lecture Delivered at Bristol, Bath, and Weston-Super-Mare, in May and June, 1882* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1882), 6-7; Pearse, *Anglo-Israel Theory*, 12-13; Titcomb, *Message to the Church*, 20-21; idem, *Is it Not Reasonable? A Dialogue on the Anglo-Israel Controversy* (London: W.H. Guest, 1877), 13; Edward Byers, *The British Empire: Its Origin and Destiny*, 20-21; Aldersmith, *Coming Events in the East and the Return of the Jews to Palestine*, 20.

**The Sure Word of Prophecy**

At all times British-Israelites stressed the importance of a strictly literal interpretation of the prophecies. This was, in fact, the only issue where Identity writers condemned mainstream Protestant ministers for leading their congregations astray. By "spiritualizing" the prophecies, they claimed, preachers minimized the role of Israel and, more importantly, the Word of God. Since the early days of Christianity, theologians had appropriated the prophecies regarding the future glory and dominance of Israel to the Church of Christ. "The prevailing notion of the present day is, that an Israelite [in prophecy] means a believer in Christ," Edward Hine explained. "This is wrong."[29] While this was the most common method of interpreting the prophecies, British-Israelites could claim support from at least one church leader for their method of literal interpretation. Bishop J. C. Ryle of Liverpool, in his work *Coming Events and Present Duties*, concluded that the spiritualization of Israel stemmed from a grave error in the early Church and had no rational basis. Though Ryle did not hold British-Israel views he did believe that the promises made to Israel could only be redeemed by the people of Israel. "Against that system I have long protested, and I hope I shall always protest as long as I live," he writes.

> What I protest against is the habit of allegorizing plain sayings of the Word of God concerning the future history of the *nation* of Israel, and explaining away the fullness of their contents in order to accommodate them to the Gentile Church. . . . Where, I would venture to ask, in the whole New Testament, shall we find any plain authority for applying the word "Israel" to any one but the nation Israel? I can find none. . . . Beware of that system of allegorizing, and spiritualizing, and accommodating, which the School of Origen [c. A.D. 200] first brought in and found such an unfortunate degree of favour in the Church. . . . [W]hatever edification you derive from applying to

[29]Hine, *Flashes of Light: Part Two of the Forty-Seven Identifications*, 65.

> your own soul the words which God addressed to His ancient people, never lose sight of the primary sense of the text.[30]

British-Israelites wholeheartedly agreed. Claiming to be the defenders of the true Word of God, adherents found the whole of human history outlined in the pages of the Old and New testaments. Blazoned across those prophecies concerning the future of the people of Israel, moreover, British-Israelites saw the history and future destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race and empire.

There were two points of prophetic focus, one largely imperial, the other racial, where British-Israelites insisted upon a strictly literal rendering of the Bible. The first neatly dovetails with the previous discussion on British-Israel millennialism. It found, within the book of the prophet Daniel, the prophesied place of the British empire in the last days. Troubled by dreams, the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar called upon the prophet Daniel, one of the captives of the House of Judah residing in Babylon (c. 580 B.C.), to interpret his disturbing visions. The most important of these involved an image of a man whose head was made of gold, his breast and arms of silver, his stomach and thighs of brass, his legs and feet partly of iron and partly of clay. Nebuchadnezzar also saw a great stone which fell upon and crushed this image. Daniel interpreted this as a progression of four kingdoms, one superseding the other until finally, the kingdom ordained by God (the stone) would destroy all the others and reign in perpetuity. This great

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[30]J. C. Ryle, *Coming Events and Present Duties: Being Miscellaneous Sermons on Prophetical Subjects* (London: William Hunt and Co., 1868), 126-29. Ryle's opinion was quoted or echoed by a number of British-Israel authors. See, for example, Renton Gibbs, *Are the British People Israelites? A Series of Letters on the Subject that Appeared in the Wallasey News from Herbert Marsden Teare and Renton Gibbs* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1917), 16; and Byers, *The British Empire*, 113-14.

"Fifth Kingdom" was anxiously awaited.[31] Here the British-Israelites echoed English millennial visionaries of more than two centuries prior. Both Identity theorists and the famed Fifth Monarchy Men of the seventeenth century interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream as holding grand implications for Britain.[32] Though similar in their focus and hopes, the significant difference which did exist between these two schools once again points out the fact that the British-Israel theory was less millennialist than imperialist.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream had been a mainstay of prophetic interpretation since before Christ. Though it went through a number of modifications, by the seventeenth century most Christian students of prophecy subscribed to a general interpretation of its meaning. The four kingdoms described by Daniel represented four literal and powerful empires of the past: the Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman. The fifth empire, described as the stone kingdom, represented the kingdom of God's chosen people "Israel" which was to arise at fullness of time and rule with Christ.[33] By the nineteenth-century, this interpretation was considered one of the "axiomatic truths" of prophecy.[34] This final kingdom, though, was the subject of much debate. The discussion broke into

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[31]Daniel ii. 14-45.

[32]P. G. Rogers, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), is a good general survey of the movement. B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-century English Millenarianism* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), does a far superior job in placing the movement within its intellectual and political context.

[33]For a discussion of the evolution of Daniel's prophecy from pre-Christian time to the seventeenth century see, Rogers, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, chap. 1.

[34]Guinness, *Light For the Last Days*, 27.

two basic camps: the spiritualists and the literalists. The spiritualists looked to the entire body of believers in Christ, or the Church, as the "Israel" of God and thus the heralds of the fifth kingdom. When the Israelites lost favor with God, the ten tribes for their idolatry and the Jews for the crucifixion, God transposed his blessings to the followers of Christ or the Church. This new and spiritual 'Israel' could expect to inherit all the promises made to God's ancient people. The literalists took Israel to mean a specific elect people of God rather than the Church as a whole: the Fifth Monarchists of the seventeenth century finding these people in themselves and the British-Israelites in the racial Israel or the entire Anglo-Saxon race. But whereas the Fifth Monarchy Men believed that the fifth kingdom would arrive through their agency in the not-too-distant future, British-Israelites saw it as being already embodied in the great Anglo-Saxon empire. The Identity writer John Gilder Shaw made this very clear in his work *Britain (or Israel): The Fifth and Last, and The Unconquerable Empire As Depicted in Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and its Interpretation* which he dedicated to Queen Victoria, "lineal descendant from King David, the sweet singer of Israel."[35]

Both the British-Israelites and the Fifth Monarchy Men considered England to be the center of God's millennial plan though the role of the nation in His designs differed between the movements. Fifth Monarchists saw England as the home of the "saints" (those who held Fifth Monarchist views) chosen by God to spread "godly revolution" to all lands and to overturn the social order including the monarchy. Only then could Christ

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[35]John Gilder Shaw, *Britain (Or Israel): The Fifth and Last, and the Unconquerable Empire* (London: S. W. Partridge and Co., 1879), iii.

establish his kingdom. British-Israelites believed the empire to be the Fifth Kingdom and thus hoped for an increasing stability of Britain's position and power both internally and externally.[36] Fifth Monarchists, in general, believed that the saints must destroy all the existing governments and then rule over all the earth with Christ. British-Israelites were far less dramatic. For them the fifth kingdom, more often styled "the fifth *empire*," was not something which was to be brought in through violent revolution by a few select of God, rather it already existed in the British empire. "In Scripture" Augusta Cook explained in one of her popular lectures, "it is called the empire of Israel, in history the British Empire."[37] The empire was the product of the entire race of Israel (not an elect few) under the guidance of Providence. Gradually extending unto the ends of the earth, spreading both civilization and Christianity in its wake, the empire was to prepare the ground for Christ's second coming. When he arrived, he would take over rule of the empire and set up his throne in the Holy Land, which, by that time would be part and parcel of Britain's imperial dominion. It was to be a smooth and peaceful transfer of power

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[36]Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 53.

[37]Augusta Cook, *Light From the Book of Daniel on History Past Present and Future: A Course of Twelve Lectures Delivered in Central Hall, Westminster, 1915-16* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1916), 47. Also, Rev. G. Lancaster, *The British Empire, the War, and the Promised Land* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1915), 18-19; Colonel Edward Fox Angelo, *Ephraim: or, the Present Location of the Hebrew Tribes* (London: Elliot Stock, 1896), 7; Titcomb, *Message to the Church From the Nineteenth Century*, 83, also, "Appendix D. On the Fifth Monarchy Men of the Reformation," 134-35. See also a non-British-Israel application of the fifth empire to Britain in *"Kings of the East"* (1849), chap. 5.

from the ruler of Israel (the British monarchy) to the King of Peace and by no means a violent revolution.[38]

The core of this vision was less a millennialist aspiration than a prophetic validation of and security for the empire. The argument of British-Israelites was simply this. The four empires described by Daniel were literally interpreted as temporal, earthly empires each surpassing the other in power and dominance. This begged two important questions. Was it not inconsistent, then, to ascribe to a "spiritual kingdom" (the Church of Christ) to position held previously by literal ones? Secondly, "how is it," Marr Murray asked, "that in the prophet Daniel's visions of the leading powers of the Times of the Gentiles no mention is made of the British Empire?"

> If the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek and the Roman Empires are mentioned in the Bible, why not the British? The other empires were puny affairs in comparison with the British. In extant, wealth, might, importance, grandeur and dominion, the British Empire is the greatest the world has ever known.[39]

British-Israelites insisted that a strictly literal interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel, in conjunction with the existence of the British Empire, answered satisfactorily both questions. They argued that to "spiritualize" the fifth empire was inconsistent. "The first, second, third, and fourth Empires were literal, tangible, and temporal Empires, so (in accordance with logic and common sense, and with due regard to precedent) the fifth Em-

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[38]Many British-Israelites believed that Christ would arrive after the great Battle of Armageddon which would pit the forces of Israel (Britain) against the forces of Satan. There would, therefore, be violence. The transfer of power from Britain to Christ, however, would be a smooth one. John Handcock, *The British Empire Is The Kingdom of Israel* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co.; London: G. Bell and Sons, 1915), 29.

[39]Marr Murray, *The Bible and the Future of Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), 62-63.

pire, which is eventually to become so large as to fill the earth, must, in the nature of things, be a temporal, and not (as some have said) a spiritual Empire."[40] Furthermore, since "God can see forward and backward through eternity" He could not have left out the very tangible and very powerful British Empire.[41] "We are the fifth or 'stone kingdom' of Nebuchadnezzar's vision," Colonel A. O. Green told his audience, "which is destined in time, as the seed of Abraham, to inherit the world." In a nationalist flourish, Green quoted both Shakespeare and Kipling and then explained that the British empire would soon possess all the "literal promises" to Israel. These had unfortunately, he went on, "been spiritualised and applied to a universal Church" when they rightfully belonged to the Anglo-Saxon people alone.[42] British-Israelites saw in Daniel's prophecy, literally interpreted, the surest foundation for Britain's continued imperial hegemony. The stone kingdom was destined to endure forever and eventually to encompass the whole earth. This was an imperial vision. There was little thought, or at least expression, of what the world would be like once power was transferred from the king of the British-Israel empire to Christ.[43] All that mattered was that no other people would ever assume the imperial mantle which the British-Israelites claimed for their race.

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[40]Shaw, *Britain (Or Israel)*, 22.

[41]Murray, ibid. 62.

[42]Colonel Arthur Octavius Green, *Why We Shall Win the War: A Lecture Given to the Officer-Cadet Students of the Staff College, Camberley, by Special Request, 8 December 1916* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1917), 10, 12.

[43]Fifth Monarchists, on the other hand, were willing to elaborate greatly on the political, social and economic structures of the kingdom of Christ. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 136.

The second point of prophetic focus dealt directly with the racial issue by addressing the argument between the "spiritual" and "literal" Israel head-on. British-Israelites maintained that the Israel of prophecy must be found to be a specific people or nation, not a spiritual body or Church. Within the prophecies of Jeremiah (xxxi. 35, 36) God declared that as long as the sun gave light in the day and the moon and stars by night then the "seed of Israel" would remain a nation.[44] "Israel is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a Church, but always as 'A NATION.' Hence it becomes a dangerous and unwarrantable liberty to take with Scripture to allude to Israel as a Church."[45] "We had no authority for taking the promises from Israel and interpreting them in a spiritual way," Dr. Alexander J. Harrison told his congregation. "It was apparent from the verses preceding and succeeding the text in Isa. lxv. that there is a continuity in God's plan," he continued, "and that the new world of righteousness would be brought in by the Israelitish *people*."[46] This was not to deny, they claimed, that God's blessings had a spiritual element, the chief of these being the salvation of the soul. These spiritual promises could and would be the possession of all members of the body of Christ, no matter what their race.[47] There were, however, other promises, ones which could not ever belong to a loose spiritual body.

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[44]A. K. Robinson, *Predestination, As Taught in the Bible, and Verified in History: A Compilation, Shewing the Fulfilment of God's Promises to Israel in the British Race* (Leeds: Harrison and Waide, 1895), 18-20.

[45]Hine, *Forty-Seven Identifications*, 11.

[46]Sermon delivered on 31 August 1902; reported in *Banner of Israel* 26 (24 September 1902).

[47]W. Rowbottom, *The Chosen People, England and Israel: Their Place and Work Among Nations* (London: W. H. Guest, 1876), 15.

"The blessings of saving religion," J. G. Taylor explained, "formerly in the exclusive possession of Israel, became the heritage of the Church universal; but the Church is not, and cannot be, heir to the land, the wealth, the colonies, and the several attributes of national Israel."[48] These were reserved for a specific people or race.

British-Israelites explained that the Jews as a people had literally inherited every one of the curses which God proscribed against them. God had condemned them to be scattered among all nations, to be few in number and bereft of children, to have no national government and to be a tormented by the peoples among whom they lived.[49] "These and many other dreadful curses have been literally fulfilled," Hine believed, "and to this day in our own country the Jew is a taunt, a hissing, and a bye-word." To strip from the House of Israel, the race of Israel, the blessings to which they were entitled and bestow them upon the spiritual Israel of Christendom was, then, grossly inconsistent. "Surely if [the prophecies] have been so minutely fulfilled with the one House, so surely shall a literal fulfillment take place of the prophecies concerning the House of Israel."[50] There was little debate as to whether the ten tribes still existed as a separate race. Charles Forster, who described their modern identity as "the most interesting problem in the world as yet unresolved," also conceded that, "the fact of their [continued] existence

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[48]J. G. Taylor, *New Testament Truth on the Anglo-Israel Controversy* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1886), 26.

[49]Here British-Israelites and mainstream Christian ministers agreed. God had brought the curses against the Jews to literal fulfillment. Wilkinson, *Englishmen Not Israelites*, 9-10.

[50]Hine, *Seventeen Positive Identifications*, 4.

stands certified by 'the sure word of prophecy'."[51] Even the *Jewish Chronicle* consented that, "the Ten Tribes are certainly in existence. All that has to be done is to discover which people represent them."[52] If the prophecies were to be literally fulfilled in a certain people, then one had only to find the race which seemed to be inheriting the blessings. "There cannot be a question," Robert Gairdner asserted, "that God's promises will be fulfilled in the future as literally as they have been in the past."[53] God had given the Anglo-Saxon race "many social and political privileges" including "wealth and prosperity above every other people," making them "indeed the chief of nations". All this was prophesied to become the inheritance of Israel, showing beyond a doubt that the Anglo-Saxons were truly "the literal seed of Israel."[54]

The emphasis on a literal interpretation of prophecy points to the essential racial and imperial nature of the British-Israel movement. It was not necessary to claim a literal descent from the Israelites to appropriate their blessings. Both the leading thinkers of Christendom, who applied them to the Church universal, as well as those seventeenth-century Protestants who claimed England as a New Israel had taken for themselves these privileges without making any racial claims. Nor was it necessary to interpret the favored place of Israel as leading to an imperial dominion over other nations. Strict millenarians,

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[51]Charles Forster, *The Monuments of Assyria, Babylonia and Persia: with a New Key for the Recovery of the Ten Lost Tribes* (London: R. Bently, 1859), 237.

[52]*Jewish Chronicle* (London), 2 May 1879.

[53]John Gairdner, *Bible Lessons and Reflections* (London: Robert Banks, 1883), 141.

[54]Eleanor M. Rush, "Prayer for Daily Use," in *A New Light* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1886), 14-15.

Fifth Monarchists and others, believed that the chosen people "Israel" would rule with Christ over all humanity in a divine kingdom which utterly destroyed and replaced all temporal kingdoms; not one which had grown up from amongst them. In fact, as A. F. Walls explains, until the late-nineteenth century divine favor was generally taken to mean security from internal strife and external enemies, not world dominion.[55] British-Israel, however, expressly claimed both of these. It claimed a racial, corporeal descent from Israel "from father to son, father to son" as the only legitimate claim to divine favor and a temporal, tangible world-wide empire as its necessary consequence.[56] This only strengthens the conclusion that the British-Israel movement was driven more by racial and imperial devotion than by Scriptural exegesis.

**The Christian Mandate**

The emphasis which the Identity placed upon the prophetic books of the Old Testament should not obscure the fact that the movement was Christian in outlook and heavily informed by the ideas of the Gospels. In claiming as their legitimate birthright the Abrahamic covenant, British-Israelites were careful not to dismiss the importance of the new covenant between Christ and his church. In fact, British-Israelites effectively combined the ideas of both the Old and the New Testaments, perhaps more so than many non-Identity Christian ministers. "It is not unfrequently urged against believers in our Identity with the lost Tribes of Israel," the Identity writer J. G. Taylor somewhat defensively ex-

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[55]Walls, "Carrying the White Man's Burden," 37.

[56]MacKenzie, *Libra: An Attempt to Weigh the Character and Value of British-Israel Identity Evidence*, 4-5; J. G. Taylor, *The British Empire: The Last and Everlasting Monarchy* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1918), 5.

plained, "that in seeking to substantiate their views they lay considerable stress on the Old Testament, to the apparent neglect of the New."

> The answer to this is simple. We turn to the Old Testament for what the Old Testament alone is able to afford us, and would think no more of resorting to the New Testament for an account of the covenants with Abraham than our critics would think of consulting it for an account of the Deluge. But it is ridiculous to infer from this that we in any way neglect or ignore it; . . . instead of Anglo-Israelism being antagonistic to New Testament principles, it could not exist without them.[57]

Chief among the principles to which Taylor refers was Christ's charge to his disciples to "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt. xxviii. 18-20; Mark xvi. 15). This was the mandate to spread the guiding light of the Gospel, as well as the civilizing influence which would naturally accompany it, to the backward nations of the earth.[58] This missionary dictate was more often than not interpreted as an imperial directive.

The dynamic between religious devotion and imperial expansion deserves closer attention here. Andrew Porter, in assessing the role which imperial scholars have traditionally imparted to religion in the course of the spread of British power, argues that religious feeling has been given rather short shrift. As Porter explains, imperial history has been overwhelmingly secular in outlook. "Historians directly concerning with the metropolitan dynamics of British expansion and empire-building," he concludes, "have often pushed religion almost entirely to one side." Instead, the focus has remained on social and especially economic interests. The empire was a product, according to these scholars,

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[57]Taylor, *New Testament Truth*, 3-4.

[58]For the idea of a link between Christianity and civilization see B. A. Stanley, "'Commerce and Christianity': Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842-1860," *Historical Journal* 26 (March 1983): 71-94.

of liberal capitalist economic forces, while religious and missionary ideas are determined to be only "products of middle class socio-economic interests. . . [M]issionaries' integration with the process of empire-building, it sometimes seems, was significant for scarcely more than its contribution to the extension of capitalist markets. In such ways religion is widely presented as the flimsiest of ideological stucco on the imperial edifice."[59] Porter suggests that the impact of religious feeling on empire-building deserves a reassessment, not the least because religion is often characterized by dogmatic belief, faith, and passion. "These not only have some independent force of their own, but are powerful spurs to both action and innovation by communities as much as individuals."[60] Porter focuses primarily upon the formal missionary societies as the organs of this religious impulse.[61] It was the long nineteenth century which witnessed the establishment, growth, and success of numerous British missionary societies. By 1899, these societies had approximately 10,000 missionaries throughout the empire and beyond. The potential impact of this group on the course of empire should be ignored only at one's own peril. The colonial administrator Sir Harry Johnston, Porter explains, understood the link between these agents of the Gospel and the imperial dynamic when he asserted that missionaries, "strengthen our hold over the country, they spread the use of the English language, they induct the natives into the best kind of civilization, and in fact each mission station is an

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[59]Porter, "Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1780-1914," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20, no. 3 (1992): 374-75.

[60]Ibid., 375.

[61]See also Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British-Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, chap. 3.

essay in colonization."[62] For Porter, the Christian mandate was a powerful ideological ingredient in the expansion of empire.

Porter's assertion of the need to recognize the religious devotion behind missionary activity and not simply regard missionaries as the agents of capitalist expansion addresses a under-emphasized sphere of the imperial mind-set. He stops short, however, in detailing the nature of the religious motivation felt by these missionaries. He portrays it only in terms of Christ's command to teach all nations the Gospel prior to his return and the concomitant evangelical Protestant doctrines (salvation by faith alone, God's agency in human actions, the approaching millennium) which gave this message its particular form.[63] There was, however, something more. There was a growing sense, especially in the years of high imperialism (1880-1920), that Britain's missionary efforts were a sign of Britain's election. There is no necessary theoretical connection between the missionary charge and national election. Christ's command to evangelize was, in fact, given to all the faithful and there is a clear difference between simply doing God's work and being God's chosen. A link between the ideas, however, did emerge in imperial Britain. British missionaries increasingly took Christ's universal mandate and applied it specifically to one people, themselves. This aspect of missionary zeal has received some limited attention by professors A. F. Walls and John Hargreaves, among others.[64] By looking at the sermons de-

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[62]Roland Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), 182.

[63]Porter, "Religion and Empire," 378-79.

[64]Walls, "'Such Boastings as the Gentiles Use . . .' Some Thoughts on Imperialist Religion," in *An African Miscellany For John Hargreaves*, ed. Roy Bridges (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University African Studies Group, 1983), 109.

livered between the years 1880 and 1920 at the Baptist Missionary Society, Walls hoped to gain some idea of what the "ordinary well informed British Churchman" thought about missions and the empire.[65] What he discovered was that the idea of chosenness became deeply infused with that of evangelization. At the 1896 meeting of the Society, J. G. Greenough announced that the British people, "are elect by all signs and proofs to be the great missionary nation." Was not British power and prosperity formed, he asked, "especially with this intent--that we should be more than all others God's messengers of light and truth to the nations that sit in darkness? In all this God's voice has been calling us. God's consecrating hands have been laid on our heads."[66] The Christian mandate was regularly transformed into the Anglo-Saxon mandate.[67]

British-Israelism added yet another twist to this idea of chosenness. Racial election was taken for granted, but it needed to be explained and not simply asserted. British-Israelites felt that ministers were on the right track in proclaiming, as W. L. Watkinson had done, a connection between Britain's and Israel's mandate. "We may confidently

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[65]Ibid.

[66]J. G. Greenough, "The Missionary Obligation," in *Missionary Sermons. A Selection from the Discourses Delivered on Behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society on Various Occasions* (London: Carey Press, 1924), 265; quoted in Walls, "Carrying the White Man's Burden," 40.

[67]Walls explains that missionaries came to regard the extensive evangelical activities of Britain and the United States as proof of the special place which the "Anglo-Saxon" occupied in God's plan for the salvation of the world. Walls, "Such Boastings as the Gentiles Use," 111-12. See also "Anglo-Saxons and the Bible," *The Spectator* 92 (March 12, 1904): 405-6. For a British-Israelite view of the joint mission of Britain and America to spread the Gospel see Rev. James M. Simpson, *God's Nation, Her Ancestry and Mission* (Toronto: William and Briggs, 1902), 120.

affirm that it is the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon to evangelise the world," he told his audience in 1897.

> Now, I say that *England stands in much the same position that Israel did.* It is the spiritual centre of the world. As Palestine came between Egypt and Assyria, so this island comes in a wonderful manner between the old and the new. God gave spiritual gifts in a remarkable degree to Israel; the revelation of Himself, the knowledge of His law, the sense of eternity. . . . God, in His government, has also given to us special powers for the diffusion of the Gospel.[68]

Such allegory, however, was not quite good enough for those who held to the Identity. Israel, which had been the curators of God's word in the past, would also be his leading evangelists in the modern age. The universal nature of Christ's message, British-Israelites determined, had been misunderstood by many Christian ministers. His message of salvation was indeed for all the world, but the ministers appointed to the task of spreading it had been designated by Christ himself. The lost tribes, British-Israelites claimed, were to be Christ's agents in the diffusion of his word unto all the nations. Using the Gospel of Matthew as his authority, Reader Harris contended that Jesus was sent specifically unto lost Israel (Matt. xv. 24). His first disciples, further, had been commanded to make ministers not of the whole world but of their lost brethren. "Go not into the way of the Gentiles," Jesus told them, "and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt. x. 5,6). Here the apostles were to make messengers of the Gospels and unto these were to be given the kingdom of God: "therefore, I say unto [the Jews], the kingdom of God shall be taken from

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[68]W. L. Watkinson, D.D., "The Destiny of Israel and of England," in *Missionary Sermons*, 208-9.

you and given to a nation [Israel] bringing forth the fruits thereof."[69] These fruits included not only the privilege of power and prosperity, but the responsibility of spreading the message of salvation. Jesus, British-Israelites maintained, was well aware of the continued national and racial existence of the lost tribes and unto them he committed his charge.

British-Israelites offered up the fact that the Anglo-Saxon, more than any other people, was prosecuting the mission given by Jesus unto the lost House of Israel as another proof of the Identity. Not only was the Anglo-Saxon race spreading the word of God, but it was doing so in line with prophetic chronology. "The years 723-722 B.C. were most important in the annals of Israel," G. Harold Lancaster explained, "for they tell the story of the attack made by Shalmanezer against the city of Samaria . . . [and in 721 B.C.] the city of Samaria was razed to the ground, and when the Israelites were taken captive into Assyria."

> Accordingly from this important stage the "seven times" [2,520 years] of Israel's chastisement and exile expired at the close of the Eighteenth Century, at the year A.D. 1799. And it is a more remarkable fact that the very era which completed the chief stage of Israel's punishment is that same period in which were born and developed those great organizations [the Gospel and missionary societies] for spreading abroad in all lands the truths of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God, and which heralded in the greater days of the glorious Nineteenth Century and of the British Empire.[70]

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[69]Matt. xxi. 43; scripture passages quoted in Reader Harris, *The Lost Tribes of Israel*, 2nd. ed. (London: S. W. Partridge, 1908), 27-29.

[70]Lancaster, *Prophecy, the War, and the Near East*, 64-65; Thomas, *God and My Birthright*, 227.

Israel was to be a light among the Gentiles and through the people Israel God was to be glorified (Isa. xliii. 21; Isa. xlix. 19). "Why is it," Major-General Hadfield asked rhetorically, "that to the Anglo-Saxon people the Bible takes so prominent a place--and is, by them, so widely distributed throughout the heathen world? Is it not because of its racial heritage from Israel to Israel in perpetuity?"[71] There is indeed a good deal of circularity in this argument. Israel was read to be God's perpetual messengers; the Anglo-Saxons, by fulfilling that role, thus confirmed both their Identity as Israel and, therefore, the eternality of Israel's charge.[72] British-Israelites saw past this logical flaw, however, and cleaved tightly the racial and imperial ideas which it contains. The central theme of the argument is that of racial election. It was a state of election, though, which was not, as many ministers asserted, newly attained but one which owed its existence to a glorious biological ancestry.

It should not be lightly passed over, though, that those who adopted this kind of 'imperialist religion',[73] whether British-Israelites or Protestant missionaries like Greenough, made an almost automatic connection between the spreading of the Gospel and the expansion of empire. It seems that few accepted the idea that the British race might be the servants of God without the aggrandizement of British dominion. This, in

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[71]Hadfield, *British-Israel Facts not Fancies*, 9; also, George O. Barnes, *Eureka! The Church of My Fathers and How and Where I Found It: or, Rather, "Was Found of It!"* 2d. ed. (London: S. Standring), 8-9.

[72]Harrison, *Who Are We? and What is Our Mission?*, 190.

[73]This ideas was suggested by John Hargreaves according to Walls, "Such Boasting," 109.

itself, points to an underlying relationship between missionary activity, racial identity, and imperial feeling. The Secretary of the Centenary Missionary Conference, James Johnston, explained that these three facets existed not only in tandem but within a dynamic: "it is to the race which is sending the blessings of Christianity to the heathen to which God is giving success as the colonisers and conquerors of the world."[74] By serving God the Anglo-Saxon race had received the gift of empire. For British-Israelites, the nature of the relationship was slightly different but a dynamic connection remained. "Israel's descendants are to cultivate the desolate places, and to build up cities and inhabit them. And the God of Israel is to be the 'God of the whole earth,'" the Canadian minister James Simpson wrote.

> The reader cannot fail to see that this prophecy brings together the kingdom of Israel of the past and the Anglo-Saxon of the present. The people of Israel were the only people to whom this prophecy originally applied, and the Anglo-Saxons are the only people to whom it applies at the present time.[75]

The Anglo-Saxon, here, had not so much earned his empire (except in that Abraham had earned God's favor for his descendants) as he had simply been redeemed of a promise. The essential idea of empire as a racial bequest from God, however, was present in both understandings. Rather than introducing the link between the ideas of racial election,

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[74]James Johnston, ed., *Report of the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World Held in Exeter Hall, June 9-19, London, 1888* (London: Nisbet, 1889), 1: xvi. For similar sentiments see speeches by Sir Monier Monier-Williams, R. N. Cust, and Rev. G. E. Post, in ibid., 1: 72, 154, 321-22.

[75]Simpson, *God's Nation*, 123-24.

missionary duty, and imperial expansion, British-Israelites only slightly altered a much more widely-held belief.

British-Israelism depended upon both the Old and New Testaments. The theory took from each those principles which supported its foundations. Once again, this came down to racial identity and imperial dominion. The scriptural scholar, Daniel Boyarin, points out the two social and political messages found in each half of the Bible. From the Old Testament, he contends, comes an insistence on corporeal genealogy which contributed to "an ethnocentric discourse, a discourse of separation and exclusiveness." While the New Testament embodies a "discourse of conversion, colonialism, the 'white man's burden'--universal brotherhood *in* 'the body' of Christ."[76] The British Israelites negotiated, probably more effectively than any one else, these conflicting messages. They retained the ethnocentricity and exclusivity of the Old Testament's contention of racial election of Israel and yet asserted the importance of spreading the light of Christ to all the peoples of the world. Into Old Testament discourse British-Israelites injected a missionary and imperial charge--Israel being a light unto the Gentiles and inheriting the waste places of the earth. Into the New Testament they introduced a special role to a particular race--the universal message of Christ carried forth by the still-elect Israel of old. The inherent contradiction between these two understandings (one of exclusion and the other of inclusion) was dissipated by means of the constant and coherent application of the idea of racial election through specific racial origins.

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[76]Daniel Boyarin, "'This We Know to Be the Carnal Israel': Circumcision and the Erotic Life of God and Israel," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Spring 1992): 504-5.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to explain the role which religious convictions played in the British-Israel theory. Though it has emphasized the motivational forces of imperial and racial pride, the intention has not been to suggest that the religious and scriptural considerations of British-Israelism were only an elaborate window dressing on an imperial and racial structure. It has been even less so to give the impression that the religious orations of British-Israelites were somehow disingenuous or simply convenient justifications for jingoism. Religious faith and scriptural ideas played defining and important roles in the design and spread of the Identity. This chapter has argued that British-Israelism was less a religious movement than an imperial one since it added nothing to nor detracted from the basic Protestant doctrines or demanded a conversion or spiritual awakening on the part of it adherents. Religion, however, could not be removed from the theory without the whole elaborate edifice crashing to the ground. If religious devotion did not contribute the motivational impetus behind the building of the Identity it did supply its conceptual images and informing spirit.

Religious ideas and scriptural images performed three functions in holding up the British-Israel theory. First, they supplied the idea of chosen Israel and the specific promises which Israel was to inherit. This gave British-Israelism its particular form. It was possible, as seen in Geoffrey of Monmouth and modern Anglo-Saxonism, to look to racial ancestors as imperial progenitors without turning to the Bible story of the election of Abraham and his descendants. British-Israelites, however, found the Israelites to be the most attractive of racial ancestors. This was solely on account of their interpretation of

God's promises to His people. Simply connecting the British with the lost Hebrews without recognizing the biblically-based promises would be at best an ethnographic oddity. British-Israelism depended upon faith in the eternality of God's promise to racial Israel whether it be a multitudinous population (Gen. xlix. 26), a missionary charge (Isa. xxvii. 6), or a world-wide empire (Isa. liv. 3). Second, religious faith helped adherents push past the difficulties which arose in the course of building secular and historical proof. In the previous chapter it was shown that British-Israelites admitted, as late as 1913, that the best which historical and scientific evidence could provide was the probability of the Anglo-Saxon's Hebrew descent. Faith in the promises, however, thrust this probability into certainty. "We admit it would be most difficult, if not impossible, to trace the wanderings of our ancestors with absolute certainty," Robert Adcock conceded, "but with the mass of evidence derivable from Scripture, we believe it will, in God's good time be made plain."[77] Some adherents went so far as to describe the historical and scientific aspect of the Identity as, "interesting to those who have the time and ability to pursue [it], and important as affording valuable corroborative proof, but it is not essential." A safer guide existed in "the sure word of prophecy."[78] British-Israelites regarded evidence derived from scripture, "as the most conclusive and irrefragable."[79] If the Identity confounded or at least drew into question the opinions of mainstream scientists and scholars,

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[77]Robert Adcock, *The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel* (London: S.W. Partridge, 1881), 14-15.

[78]J. M. Grant, *The British Nation Identical with the Stone Kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream. A Paper Read before the Cheltenham Anglo-Israel Association on 26 July 1880* (London: W. H. Guest, 1880), 16.

[79]Howlett, *Anglo-Israel and the Jewish Question*, 91, 100.

this, British-Israelites affirmed, was exactly what was supposed to happen (Isa. xxix. 14).[80] The workings of God were not always to be clear to even the wisest of men. Finally, religion possesses an emotive force which is difficult to find in purely racial or imperial concepts. The emotional impulses associated with such phenomena as Nazism and jingoism have been correctly described as possessing a religious intensity.[81] British-Israelism depended upon the power of the emotional forces latent in its central religious contention of racial or national favor.[82]

From the pages of scripture and with the intensity of faith British-Israelites built up a racial and imperial picture of the Anglo-Saxon race which, they believed, most ably explained its favored position. "The present amazing world position of the Anglo-Saxon race, the British Empire, and the United States of America, needs some explanation. It is no fortuitous development," according to Dr. J. Llewellyn Thomas. "The writer confidently contends that there is only one all-sufficient and valid explanation, namely, that the Race is in very deed the lawful and actual inheritor of the stupendous BIRTHRIGHT BLESSINGS conferred on the House of Joseph recorded in the Bible."[83] The greatest of

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[80]Henry D. Houghton, *Will Our Dead Soldiers Come Back? The Evidence of Scripture* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1919), 69.

[81]Meades, "The Devil's Work"; Faber, *The Vision and the Need*; Eldridge, *England's Mission*; Betts, *The False Dawn*; Walls, "Carrying the White Man's Burden."

[82]Conor Cruise O'Brien draws a number of important parallels between the emotional forces behind religious devotion and those which lay as the center of nationalism. O'Brien suggests that these two aspects of humanity have a similar origin and, as manifested in the Hebrew Bible, "the two are one and the same thing." *God Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 2-3.

[83]Dr. J. Llewellyn Thomas, *God and My Birthright: or, The Fifth World Empire* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1920), 5.

these blessings was imperial dominion and it was around this one which nearly all Identity literature revolved. Other 'identifying marks' such as Sabbath-keeping and the Englishman's proneness to drink were added as corroborating evidence, but the empire was the clearest mark of all.[84] The central place of the British Empire in Identity thought will be examined more closely in the following chapter.

[84]See Ellen M. Rogers, *Britain In History, Ancient and Modern, or, Proofs Linking Israel with Britain Throughout the Ages* (London: James Nisbet, 1887), chap. 2; Senior, *The British Israelites*, 134.

## CHAPTER SIX

## "A NATION AND A COMPANY OF NATIONS": BRITISH-ISRAEL'S EMPIRE

While the connection between the imperial history of Great Britain and the British-Israel movement has been alluded to numerous times throughout this work, the following pages will provide a more detailed analysis. It can be said from the outset that the relationship was a very close and dependent one. Even British-Israelites and other contemporaries recognized this, though they often had the nature of the relationship reversed. "Of one thing I feel assured," Colonel Gawler enthused, "*The British Empire stands or falls with the Anglo-Israel theory.*"[1] An antipodean secular newspaper went nearly to this extent when it declared that,

> Politically considered, Anglo-Israelism is also calculated to exert a powerful influence on the course of events. British-Imperialism rests, unconsciously, upon the theory of the Hebrew origin of the race, especially in the recognition of a 'manifest destiny'--to employ the language of journalism--or of a duty to 'take up the white man's burden.' A hidden conviction that Britain's duty is a sacred trust, and that moral and religious considerations must be paramount in all schemes of expansion.[2]

As it happens, of course, neither the empire nor the imperial program was dependent upon the British-Israel theory nearly as much as the Identity depended upon British expansion. Imperialism gave substance to the theory's otherwise ethereal message. Recognizing this, London's British-Israel Association added the "significant word IMPERIAL"

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[1]Gawler, *Dan, the Pioneer of Israel*, v (original emphasis).

[2]"Editorial," *New Zealand Times*, 8 July 1899.

to their title in 1909 as an effort to convey "the fact that British-Israelism is Imperial."[3] The course of the theory's popularity paralleled that of the growth of the empire and even at times when overseas possessions evoked at best only an ambivalent response from many in Britain, British-Israelism remained a haven for those who felt a deep conviction for the Anglo-Saxon's commanding world role. As John M. MacKenzie has shown, even when the majority of the population knew or cared little about colonial ideas or territories, Britain's imperial position did create for them "a world view which was central to their perceptions of themselves."[4] With its emphasis on racial identity and imperial dominance, British-Israel became an active partner in this creative process.

It has been, hopefully, made clear that the Identity was particularly interested in perceptions, specifically that of the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon. Consequently, the adherents and propagators of the British-Israel theory concerned themselves primarily with the perception of the security and continued growth of the British empire rather than with the day to day realities and concerns which it involved. Despite the signs of relative decline which became increasingly apparent after 1880, British-Israelites refused to believe that Britain would somehow lose its predominating position among the nations. The British-Israel theory, however, was more responsive to the course of empire than may be perceived at first glance. Though at times it exhibited the traits of music-hall imperialism and rampant Jingoism it did attempt to analyze the course, position, and ultimate destiny of the empire more fully than either of those ever did. It is this chapter's purpose to show

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[3]"Association Report," *Banner of Israel* 33 (2 June 1909): 241.

[4]MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, 2.

this and to explain that, as a consequence of this intellectual investment in the empire, the theory was bound closer to its course and success than those simpler expressions of patriotism.

Britain's expansion, British-Israelites believed, was neither haphazard nor self-serving, and though it was to continuously increase it was not to do so without a plan, a direction, and a goal. These had been laid out long before Britain began her overseas exploits and could be traced, so they believed, in all imperial history. To best express the relationship between the theory and the empire this chapter will address three aspects of British-Israel imperial thought. To begin, it will show the pride Identity adherents held in their empire and their unceasing marvel at its glory. It will address the way they viewed the empire as a whole, the nature of its various components, and its providential destiny. Also the idea of a direction, particularly the geographical direction which British-Israelites affirmed, will be considered in some depth. The Eastern Question of the nineteenth century brought the Ottoman Empire and Palestine into the purview of British foreign policy. Since they believed the Holy Land to be the ultimate goal of the empire, British-Israelites anxiously awaited the collapse of Turkey and their absorption of the land of promise. Finally, certain areas of the empire deserved British-Israel's special attention since they posed potential problems to the theory's coherence. To explain the loss of the American colonies in 1783 and the continued trouble in Ireland at a time when there was to be "peace in Israel", adherents discovered unique circumstances and identities to answer these difficulties. It should become clear, in the end, that the imperial expansion of Great Britain formed the core of the British-Israel racial identity as well as

provided the psychological force behind the remarkable spread of the theory at the high point of British imperial enthusiasm.

**Inheriting the Gentiles**

In the book of the prophet Isaiah, God spoke to his people Israel in these words: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations. Spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited" (liv. 2-3). This promise was central to the British-Israel view of empire. Other imperial visionaries, as well, appropriated this destiny for Britain. The Bishop of Durham took the passage and asked the delegates at the Wolverhampton Church Congress if a "somewhat analogous destiny" did not seem to be reserved for the English people and the English Church.[5] Thirty seven years prior to this Martin Tupper had committed outright larceny of these lines when he decided that they applied less to Israel than to the Saxon race--"the world's true lords."[6] British-Israelites, however, assured themselves that this promise could never be appropriated by a Gentile people, nor could a Gentile people receive simply a similar inheritance. Since Britain had come into receipt of the promise, the British must be Israel. This was the argument which underlay the British-Israel empire. A product of the Anglo-Saxon's unique ancestry, expansion was

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[5]"Church Congress" *Times* (London), 4 October 1887; Bishop Titcomb remarked on how close the Bishop of Durham had come to understanding British-Israel "truth" in both this speech and on other occasions, and yet, like most of the nation, remained blind as to the Identity, *Message to the Church*, 103.

[6]MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History*, 97.

both inevitable and secure. In taking their rightful place among the nations the British were "to do this without fear; nor shall they be ashamed of these transactions, for they have the Divine sanction and command." Building an empire was not always peaceful or without cost, British-Israelites understood, but it remained necessary if God's word was to be fulfilled.[7] With these assumptions guiding the way, British-Israelites delighted in surveying and detailing the growth and course of the British empire.

When John Wilson penned the seminal work on the Israelitish origin of the Anglo-Saxons and other "Gothic" nations in 1840 few of his passages made any reference to imperial dominion. There was, of course, some British expansion in the early decades of the nineteenth century, but this did not fire the popular imagination nearly as much as did the "new imperialism" of the final decades of the century.[8] Rather, Wilson spoke mostly in

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[7]Douglas A. Onslow, *The Kingdom of the Lord and the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. The Destinies of Israel and Judah Traced Through the Old and New Testaments*, with a preface by Denis Hanan, D.D. (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1910), 74.

[8]Numerous works exist which provide a general description of this "new imperialism" and all the contradictions which it entailed. See, for example, Keith Robbins, *The Eclipse of a Great Power: Modern Britain 1870-1992*, 2d ed. (London: Longman, 1994), 18-24; Lance Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of Imperial Britain, 1860-1912* (Cambridge: University Press, 1986); T. O. Lloyd, *The British Empire, 1558-1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), chaps, 8 & 9; John P. Halstead, *The Second British Empire: Trade, Philanthropy and Good Government, 1820-1890*, Contributions in Comparative Colonial Studies, no. 14 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 31-54; Winfried Baumgart, *Imperialism, The Idea and Reality of British and French Expansion, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); W. Ross Johnston, *Great Britain Great Empire: An Evaluation of the British Imperial Experience* (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1981), part III. The term "new imperialism" to describe the expansion of Europe after 1870 was used as early as 1941 by Carlton J. H. Hays in, *A Generation of Materialism, 1871-1900* (New York: Harper and Brothers), 217. Though later authors would argue that the expansion of empire in these years held more similarities than differences to that earlier in the century (J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review* 6 (August 1953): 1-15), most scholars today acknowledge that the last decades of

terms of the racial superiority of the Europeans, especially in terms of government, laws, the arts, war, and morals. These, for Wilson, were the chief marks of Israel in the latter days.[9] Yet imperial overtures made a brief appearance in his work since his theory, he believed, explained a coming European hegemony. "Thus," he concluded his book, "[by means of its Israelitish origin] we may account for the universal and continually improving genius of the race now inhabiting Europe--*a race, evidently designed to spread abroad, and cover the globe*;--a race, in every respect fitted for universality; and, especially, for being teachers of the world." It was Wilson, also, who first asked the question underpinning most other British-Israel imperial discourse: "wherefore such favourable positions, so widely scattered, and so variously placed, all over the globe, have been given to the British nation, in particular.[sic] The like hath not been done to any nation, as to this."[10] Until the 1870s, as has been explained, Wilson's message inspired relatively few. Yet those writers who did take it up in the intervening years, years which saw Britain's power and influence increase, could not help take notice of British imperial growth.[11] It was the final decades of the century, however, which witnessed both the birth of the new imperialism and the rapid spread and development of British-Israelism. The connection between these two phenomena was more than coincidental.

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the century witnessed an increased and unprecedented official and popular interest in the extension of imperial control.

[9]Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin*, 3rd American ed., lects. IV, IX-XII.

[10]Ibid., 233 (emphasis mine).

[11]Glover, *England: The Remnant of Judah and the Israel of Ephraim*, 9-10, 145; Moore, *The Lost Tribes and the Saxons of the East and the West*, 92-93.

British-Israelism adapted and responded to many of the forces that shaped the nature of popular imperialism after 1870. As other European states, as well as Japan and the United States, joined the ranks of imperial powers, imperial enthusiasts sought to strengthen the idea that Britain could and would remain dominant.[12] The potential threat which these powers embodied only convinced imperial thinkers that holding onto and even consolidating the empire was necessary to the survival of Britain. J. R. Seeley, whose *The Expansion of England* (1883) had a large impact on both British-Israelites and other imperialists, predicted a second-rate position for Great Britain unless it could hold its empire together. The emphasis shifted, therefore, as the British found competing parties in imperial expansion. The "new imperialism" was a largely defensive response to a changing world scene. It now became common to not only emphasize Britain's successes but also to highlight other countries' difficulties in their imperial enterprises.[13] Likewise it was in the years after 1870 that the British-Israel theory, especially under the guidance

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[12]See chapter one for analysis of the imperial confidence which emerged in the last decades of the century.

[13]"French and German Colonization," *The Nation* 65 (16 December 1897): 471; C. B. Norman, "The Colonies of France," *The Nineteenth Century* 15 (May 1884): 873-96; "Why France Cannot Colonise," *The Spectator* 58 (26 September 1885): 1264-65; John Ayde, "The Colonial Weakness of France," *The Nineteenth Century* 45 (January 1899): 56-66; George Baden-Powell, "The Expansion of Germany," *The Nineteenth Century* 16 (December 1884): 869-78; C. E. Dawkins, " The German Abroad," *The National Review* 5 (1885): 259-67; Henry Birchenough, "The Expansion of Germany," *The Nineteenth Century* 43 (February 1898): 182-91; Robert C. Witt, "An Experiment in Colonisation," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 163 (June 1898): 788-95; *Morning Post* (London), 23 August 1884; *Money Market Review* (London), 1 December 1900. During the First World War, British-Israelites remarked upon Britain's acquisition of numerous German colonies seeing the hand of Providence at work. Edward Odlum took time to point out that the North Sea island of Heligoland, a British possession transferred to Germany in 1890, had been gradually sinking, implying that God was denying Germany one of Israel's possessions. Odlum, *God's Covenant Man*, 27-28.

of Edward Hine, came to propound that the Anglo-Saxon peoples alone could expect to see their imperial dominion increase since they alone were of the House of Israel. Other countries might make imperial noises or even establish colonies, but they would all be unsuccessful in the end and find their holdings vanish or diminish as had those of Rome, Spain, Holland, and Portugal. The British alone, as Israel, had the instincts for successful colonization. "In these days," Oxonian informed his readers, "as we are constantly reminded, by some fracas in a German colony in Africa, or a filibustering expedition to some distant island by the French, we have rivals in "colonization" but rivals without the *instinct.*"[14] They were, therefore, rivals who were doomed to failure. Even those who later maintained Wilson's ideas about the Israelitish origin of much of the European population bestowed upon Britain, by virtue of its descent from Ephraim, a particular genius in colonization and imperial expansion.[15]

By the 1880s the empire had become the initial point of British-Israel inquiry. The question which Wilson had asked some forty years earlier concerning the source of Britain's greatness was repeated numerous times by later adherents as a way to introduce the subject. "Why should so small a country as Britain possess such a great influence over the world as she does, and be successful in all her wars, notwithstanding that she continually makes the most palpable blunders?" asked Colonel Senior in the opening pages of his book. "We have many faults, socially, nationally, and individually, to confess and

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[14]*The Covenant People* 2 (July 1895): 33.

[15]Marriott, *Horæ Propheticæ*, 53-57; de Verdon, *The Veil Lifted From All Nations*, 19.

bemoan; yet, for all that, it will be admitted that we are 'a great nation.' What is the secret of Britain's greatness?"[16] "May it not be accounted for," suggested H. Herbert Pain, an investment banker and member of the London Stock Exchange, "by the supposition that [the British Empire] is identical with the Stone Kingdom of Daniel, and the House of Israel of the Old Testament prophets?"[17] Numerous Identity works anchored this assumption firmly at their base and then proceeded to "prove" its validity by surveying in glorious terms the nature and extent of the empire and its corresponding agreement with the prophecies. Maps, charts and diagrams decorated the pages of British-Israel books and journals, showing the growth and present state of the empire. Taking numbers and anecdotes from such sources as the *Daily Telegraph* and *Whitaker's Almanac*, British-Israelites sought to convince their readers that theirs was not idle boast but one which should be obvious to anyone with access to a newspaper, standard reference work, or world atlas.[18] Such a marvelous empire, they determined, required deeper investigation.

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[16]Senior, *The British-Israelites*, 1; also, Eleanor M. Rush, *A New Light*, 4-5; Oxonian, *Israel's Wanderings*, 4; Garnier, *The Ten Tribes From Captivity Until Now*, 20; L. Sapsworth, *The Bible Arch of British-Israel Truth from Genesis to Revelation: Its Keystone and Manner of Its Building*, 3rd ed. (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1912), 5; William Carpenter, *The Israelites found in the Anglo-Saxons. The Ten Tribes Supposed to Have Been Lost, Traced from the Land of Their Captivity to the Occupation of the Isles of the Sea; with an Exhibition of Those Traits of Character and National Characteristics Assigned to Israel in the Book of the Hebrew Prophets* (London: George Kenning, 1874), 66-67.

[17]H. Herbert Pain, *Englishmen Israelites. Turks Edomites. Politics and Prophecy*, 2d ed. (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1897), 3.

[18]Rev. Robert Douglas extracted from Whitaker's a table of imperial figures and its accompanying explanatory paragraph which explained that they present "a result unparalleled in the World's history," and that "it would be well if teachers would impress these truths [concerning the grandeur and justice of the empire] upon their pupils." Douglas "cordially endorse[d] the writer's recommendation." *Ephraim-England*, 18. *The Daily*

The popular sentiment of empire which reached its peak in the last two decades of the nineteenth century was knit tightly within the rhetoric of the Identity. Yet the feelings of jingoism and the ideas of Social Darwinism which helped guide much of this mentality was tempered to some degree in British-Israel thought. In ascribing to themselves an Israelitish origin, believers were forced to flesh-out the reasons behind and purposes for the race's expansion. Simple jingoistic and racial ideas were well suited to supply straightforward confirmation of the "right" of the British to conquer, but it is clear from the tone of and sentiments found in their lectures and writings that British-Israelites were not interested in allowing these declarations to justify the empire. Adherents felt that the empire needed no "justification"; that to attempt such a process implied a desire to assuage feelings of guilt. Rather, British imperialism required a deeper level of understanding and soul searching. Unlike jingoes British-Israelites did not assert that a simple racial or moral superiority of the Anglo-Saxon made this expansion a good or necessary thing. The British-Israelite Sir Arthur Cotton, K.S.C.I., explained that the Anglo-Saxon was as immoral, if not more so, than other peoples: "think of the history of the opium traffic; no nation was ever more guilty towards another than we have been in this."[19] Identity writers often admonished the readers, both young and old, not to take their inheritance with a

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*Telegraph* was a favorite source cited by British-Israelites, once even being recommend to readers for consistently advocating the ideals behind the British empire. *The Messenger* 1 (July 1886): 86. For the role which newspapers played in the spread of the imperial idea see James A. Startt, *Journalists For Empire: The Imperial Debate in the Edwardian Press, 1901-1913*. Contributions in Comparative Colonial Studies, no. 29 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991).

[19]Sir Arthur Cotton, "Letter to the Editor," *The Banner of Israel* 9 (9 December, 1885): 489.

sense of pride, for had not earned it from any great moral uprightness.[20] They should, instead, recognize it as a fulfilled promise to their race, and then, knowing that God has been true to His word, go about their appointed task to be the leaders and servants of humanity.[21] Neither did the Anglo-Saxons obtain the empire from *accidental* racial traits. According to much imperial rhetoric the empire was largely attributable to the imperial characteristics of the race. For British-Israelites, such explanation went only half way. No doubt, the conceded, the Anglo-Saxons were born colonists, possessing all the qualities necessary to conquer the world. "But we have a right to ask," the Reverend Jones reminded his readers, "should we be possessed of all these qualities had we been only a Gentile people? Is it not probable that those personal gifts have come with our Israelitish origin and destiny, furnished thus by Providence so as to be qualified to become the chief of nations, and to be the great landlord of the earth, and mistress of the sea, and messenger of mankind?"[22] There was in British-Israelism a desire for a deeper level of under-

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[20]Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, "Some Notes on My Australian Tour," *The Methodist Times* (London), 5 November 1891.

[21]Such admonitions appeared as early as the late 1860s from the pen of the Identity's founder, John Wilson, "The Expansion of the Anglo-Saxon Race," *The Watchmen of Ephraim* III (September 1, 1868): 159-60; see also Rev. W. L. Benthall, M.A., "Abraham, the Friend of God," *The Anglo-Israel Almanack for the Year 1907*, 75. A few Identity works appeared directed towards children. These, likewise, explained that while the Anglo-Saxons may glory in their empire, they must not let it lead to pride or arrogance or think they had somehow earned it. See Philo-Israel, *The History of the House of Israel: How They Were Lost and How They Were Found. Told For Children*, 6th ed. (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1898), 39-41; Augusta Cook, *What and Why? or Anglo-Israel Belief in Questions and Answers for Young and Old* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1914), 26-27; Helen M. P. Bouverie, Countess of Radnor, *Notes and Queries on the Origin of British-Israel* (London: Marshall Press, 1922), 18.

[22]Rev. J. Idrisyn Jones, "What We Owe to Israelism," *The Anglo-Israel Almanack for the Year 1912*, 42.

standing than could be found in simple music-hall imperial declarations.[23] British-Israelites did not simply accept the proposition that Britain was, as Bismark told the Reichstag in 1890, "the greatest Colonial Power in the world," they believed that to truly comprehend it one had to not simply marvel at it but seek its source and role in human history.[24]

The distinction between British-Israel and jingoistic rhetoric is a subtle one; the difference was more in the level of inquiry rather than in the feelings of pride which motivated the two strains of thought. On not a few occasions the British-Israelites were called jingoes and the belief in the descent of the British from the lost tribes was referred to as the "chief article" of the jingoistic faith.[25] British-Israelites did indeed share much of the same imperial rhetoric with the populace at large. Two ideas in particular, those of race and destiny, appealed to both bodies. Popular imperialism asserted that the Anglo-Saxon, by means of his racial qualities, had built up this great edifice of empire. There was, moreover, an emerging sense that the race and empire had a particular destiny to fulfill in the world. British-Israelites, though accepting these assertions as true, again pushed imperial understanding further by demanding that the underlying reason for both these phe-

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[23]See Penny Summerfield, "Patriotism and Empire: Music Hall Entertainment, 1870-1914," in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 17-48.

[24]Speech of 26 January, 1890, quoted in Robert Douglas, *Darkest Britain's Epiphany*, 148-49.

[25]*Echo* (London), 19 May 1882; *The Bystander*, G. Smith, ed. (January 1890): 134-36; "Personal Notes," *Glasgow Daily Mail*, 15 January 1901.

nomena be addressed. "Now, when we look round the world and see the position which the British occupy in it," one British-Israelite began,

> and see how the growth of our Empire is brought about by some unseen Power without the intervention of Statesmen or Parliaments, and also see that we cannot in any way compare the British Empire with any Empire that has gone before, then we are struck with the fact that there is something very extraordinary and mysterious about it, and we wonder if it is our pre-ordained mission to civilise and evangelise the world. Then this great question arises: Who were the progenitors of the British race? This question our most famous seats of learning, universities, and colleges have failed to solve for centuries past. There is no doubt that the British have a great mission to fulfil [sic]. . . . We will go into the subject and see how that progenitors of the British race, how the position which the British now occupy in the world, and how the British Empire is referred to in the Bible.[26]

For the British-Israelites, as for many others, the racial origins of the British played a large part in the creation of the empire, the Anglo-Saxon being widely referred to as an "imperial race." Yet British-Israelites more effectively tied the racial origin of the Anglo-Saxon with the present position of the race and the destiny of the empire; in their minds they were inseparable, the first being the primal source of the latter two. Much detailed explication of the place, role, and destiny of the empire and its parts filled the pages of British-Israel tracts. The issues they dealt with were those which concerned both the official and popular imperial minds, i.e., the importance of maintaining naval supremacy, the future of the dependencies, the status of the white dominions, and the potential for federation. Their conclusions, while emanating from a different angle and a sometimes more searching inquiry, contained a deep faith in and heartfelt devotion to the empire similar to that found in the press and rhetoric of imperial Britain.

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[26]W. A. Holme Twentyman, *The British Empire, or, Rule Britannia* (London: Robert Banks & Son., 1903), 1-2.

British-Israelites examined the position, function, and relation to Britain of each possession and then sought to explain its role in the empire in terms of its racial and prophetic alignment. In British-Israel "truth",[27] the empire, though one, had three distinct manifestations. First, the British controlled certain areas of the world which ensured them of military and commercial supremacy. These "gates" were the coaling, strategic, or commercial stations such as Gibraltar, Malta, the Suez Canal, St. Helena, Mauritius, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and they embodied a distinct and crucial body of holdings giving evidence of Britain's identity as Israel. Second, there was the great "heathen empire," those sections controlled by Britain but populated largely by the native inhabitants. India and much of Africa were included in this division. Finally, there were the white dominions, rapidly becoming nations of their own and populated by people of largely British descent. These areas, once controlled by aboriginal populations, had been effectively cleared in fulfillment of prophecy and were now peopled by God's chosen Israel. This division of the empire, it should be noted, was not wholly original to British-Israelites. The importance of strategic and commercial stations and the governmental distinction between the dependencies and dominions were firmly established in the offi-

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[27]By the turn of the century, Identity adherents rejected the term "theory" in connection with their teachings with all of its implications of uncertainty. "That the British are of Ephraim-Israel," W. T. Wiseman explained, "is a Biblical and historical fact, and therefore not a theory." "Questions and Answers," *The British Ecclesia* 1 (September 20, 1905): 7. The official handbook of the belief, issued first in 1891 and having sold fifteen thousand copies by 1901 and reached twelve editions and thirty thousand copies by 1918, was unabashedly called *British-Israel Truth: A Handbook for Enquirers* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1891).

cial imperial mind.[28] British-Israelites largely adopted this understanding of the empire and then set about to address its creation, progress, and concerns in terms both racial and prophetic.

Edward Wheeler Bird, better known as Philo-Israel, championed and developed the central place which the military and commercial stations occupied in the Identity.[29] These, he asserted, were the "gates of thine enemies" which God promised to Abraham's descendants (Gen. xxii. 17). Because of his career in the Indian Civil Service, Bird undertook several trips between Britain and its eastern holdings. In the course of his voyages, he had become familiar with the many of the, "Gates of the enemies of British Israel, now in the undisputed possession of our race, such possession giving us the mastery over contiguous foreign lands, neighbouring seas, over the world's highways, and the naval supremacy throughout the planet."[30] Apart from ensuring Britain's naval supremacy and uninterrupted access to its colonies and trading posts, they made the rest of the empire possible. They were therefore, in his view, the most important of all the identifying marks of Israel. "The Gate idea," he wrote Piazzi Smyth in 1882, "is the centre and soul

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[28]Jenks, *The Government of the British Empire* (1919). Nicholas Mansergh examines the position of various colonies and the development of the Commonwealth in *The Commonwealth Experience*, rev. ed., 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982); also Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, 1: 6-7.

[29]His most complete expository on this idea is found in Philo-Israel, *The Geography of the Gates*, 3rd ed. (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1897). The first edition of this work appeared in 1880. See also idem, *Are the English People the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel?* (1875), 15-19.

[30]Philo-Israel, *The Geography of the Gates*, 10-11. In the third edition of his work, Philo-Israel surveyed in some detail nearly forty of Britain's most important gates.

of 'Our Identity' and to think that God should first have given that idea to Abraham and then entrusted the solution to us! It makes one gasp with wonder."[31] He later explained that all the other privileges of Israel, the multitudinous seed, the empire, commercial supremacy, boundless wealth, missionary operations, and military successes were dependent upon Israel holding these gates. "Had God not given us the 'Gates,'" he wrote, "we should not have been able to fulfil the destiny which has prescribed to us the faculty and power 'to rule over many nations,' while they shall 'never rule over us;' for we should have lacked the naval supremacy, the wealth, and the universal territorial dominion which 'the Gates' confer."[32] Making reference to a prize-wining article by the future Admiral Philip H. Colomb, Philo-Israel and others tried to show that these stations were widely recognized as central to the empire. Colomb, moreover, had unconsciously used the prophetic term "gates" to describe them. "It is worth while to note," Colomb contended, "how a sort of destiny has possessed us, not only with a command over all the great commercial routes, but with the GATES of these routes."[33] Such stations also held a particular fascination for Lord Fisher who, as both First Lord of the Admiralty and a devoted British-Israelite, recognized both their naval and prophetic importance. "I am convinced we are the lost tribes," he told the *Daily News* in 1909. "Do you know that there are Five

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[31]E. W. Bird, Brighton, to Charles Piazzi Smyth, Edinburgh, 21 August 1882, Royal Observatory Edinburgh, A 14.66.

[32]Philo-Israel, *The Geography of the Gates*, 16.

[33]Captain Philip H. Colomb, R.N., "Naval Prize Essay for 1878," *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* 23 (no. xciv., 1878); quoted in ibid., 18-19; also in Colonel John Garnier, *"The Kings of the East", and the Great Days of Jezreel* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1906), 15-16.

Keys to the Word--the Straits of Dover, the Straits of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, the Straits of Malacca and the Cape of Good Hope? *And every one of these Keys we hold.* Aren't we the lost tribes?"[34] These holdings did not, for the most part, inspire the imagination as much as stories about the spread of the race, the fields of adventure in Africa, or the romance of India. That numerous British-Israel authors made special mention of them, however, indicates the crucial role which they played in the theory as the foundation and safeguards of Britain's supremacy.[35]

What the Parliament and the Colonial Office referred to as dependencies, protectorates, or Crown colonies, British-Israelites saw as the "heritage of the heathen" of which David sang as eventually coming under Israel's rule. "He has showed his people the power of his works," Psalmist exhorted, "in giving them the heritage of the heathen" (Psa. cxi. 6).[36] India, the West Indies, and Africa, however, were given to Britain for

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[34]"A Character Study," *The Daily News* (London) 17 July 1909. Fisher expressed this same sentiment five years earlier in his work *Naval Necessities*, 1: 219, only here he listed Alexandria instead of Suez. He followed up the list with a parenthetical, "N.B. Another proof that we belong to the ten lost tribes of Israel!" *The Papers of Admiral Sir John Fisher*, ed. P. K. Kemp (London: printed for the Navy Records Society, 1960), 1: 161; also Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: A History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1964), 473. For the historical importance of these stations see Gerald S. Graham, *Tides of Empire: Discursions on the Expansion of Britain Overseas* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), chap. 3 & 4. Graham quoted Fisher on this point but failed to mention his British-Israel views, ibid., 72.

[35]Adcock, *The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel*, 14-15; Rush, *The New Old Story*, 30-32; Byers, *The British Empire*, 14; Berry, *Iscah: A Tale of the Times*, 167; Roe, *Israel's World*, 19; Twentyman, *The British Empire*, 53-57.

[36]Pain, *Englishmen Israelites*, 49-50; Aldersmith, *Fulness of the Nation*, 2d ed., 160-62; Hanan and Aldersmith, eds., *British-Israel Truth*, 8th ed., 96; Glover, *England: The Remnant of Judah*, 9-10.

purposes higher than dominion or exploitation. The British would conquer and rule everywhere they went and where they could not colonize with their own race they would at least bring blessings and improvements.[37] Modern declarations of a white man's burden or manifest destiny were only an unconscious recognition of God's promise to Israel that they would spread forth and be a blessing to all peoples of the earth (Gen. xxvii. 14).[38] Though Israel was to inherit the heathen, she could not, as seen in last chapter's devotion to the missionary role in British-Israelism, allow them to remain in their heathen state. The spread of Christianity and civilization to subject races was a charge which British-Israelites took to heart. Yet while these parts of the empire should be cherished and the responsibilities which they entailed be solemnly considered, they must never be mistaken for equal partners with the "white" colonies. The Anglo-Saxon race in Britain, the dominions, and the United States were the race of Israel, but,

> the heathen nations, such as those in south India, who seek shelter under "the cedar tree, the goodly one," and dwell in the shadow of it (Ezek. xvii. 23), these never were, and never will be, part of British-Israel, racially and nationally, but are subject races, we believe, enjoying those blessings that Israel's protection is destined to bring with it (Isa. xxvii. 6; Gen. xxii. 17, 18, &c. &c.).[39]

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[37]That this was being done was expressed glowingly by David Wells, "Great Britain and the United States: Their True Relations," *North American Review* 162 (April 1896): 385-405.

[38]Byers, *The British Empire*, 10-11; Howlett, *Anglo-Israel and the Jewish Problem*, 10; J. T. Gott, "Deus Misereatur," *The Banner of Israel* 1 (28 February 1877): 79; Israelite, *The Ten Tribes*, 15; Simpson, *God's Nation*, 128-30.

[39]"Note By the Editor," *Banner of Israel* 4 (22 September 1880): 379; Aldersmith, *Fulness of Nations*, 162-3.

This racial distinction was never forgotten. With Africa and the West Indies, this was rarely an issue, the racial lines between the Anglo-Saxons and the natives being so starkly drawn.[40] British-Israelites surveyed the work of the colonial administrators and missionaries in bringing the blessings of civilization to Africa and expressed confidence that Israel's work on the Dark Continent would proceed apace.[41]

The case of India, especially the northern principalities, was less clear-cut. The antiquity of Indian civilization, the dependence of the British rulers on existing native governmental structures, and the general failure of missionaries to make inroads into Indian religious life led some British-Israelites to wonder if Britain could ever dominate or replace Indian culture to the same extent that it seemed to be doing in Africa and other areas of the empire. Some adherents suggested that a portion of the Indians were also of the race of Shem whereby they could claim a relationship to their British conquerors and perhaps some limited immunity to the British juggernaut.[42] Not only did this interpretation explain some of the racial and linguistic affinities (Indo-European) between the British and the Indians, it also mirrored the generally pervading opinion that India's role and

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[40]Grimaldi, *Ephraim in England*, 4.

[41]G., "The Land of Ham As The Inheritance of the House of Israel," *The Banner of Israel* 1 (3 January 1877): 1; J. Idrisyn Jones, "Israel in Africa," *The Northern British-Israel Review* 1 (April 1911): 49-54.

[42]First suggested by George Moore in *The Lost Tribes: Saxon of the East and West*, this idea found echoes in Israel, *Where are the Ten Tribes of Israel*, 16-17; Nellie Dean Taylor, *Victoria, Queen of Anglo-Israel* (New York: Neale Publishing, 1903), 36-37; Twentyman, *The British Empire*, 50; Philo-Israel, *Are the English People the Lost Ten Tribes*, 4th ed., 16. For a brief literature survey concerning the limited nature of British power in India see, Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin, *Reappraisals in British Imperial History* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975), 4-6.

place in the empire was of a unique character.[43] The physical and administrative improvements which the British were bestowing upon India were obvious, however, and though they might never completely Anglicize the Indians it was their responsibility to cultivate in them a higher civilization than that they had originally enjoyed.[44] In the main, however, a majority of adherents looked upon the tropical sections of the empire, including India and other eastern possessions, as that heritage of the heathen promised to Israel and as offering enormous opportunities "for our race to prove themselves a means of blessing, [for] wherever the Anglo-Saxon race penetrates and establishes itself, there material and spiritual blessings flow."[45]

For the native populations of the white colonies, however, these blessings were not so readily available. The decline and virtual disappearance of these people was explained as a necessary, if somber, event in the course of Israel's destiny. Where the Anglo-Saxon could not settle, he was to bring blessings. But where the race could be established in any significant numbers, it required room. Citing Jeremiah xlvi. 28, and Isaiah lx. 2, British Israelites explained that God promised that He would "make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven [Israel]" and that those people who would not serve Israel should perish. "The fulfilment of these prophecies by the British Race, *and they alone*, is beyond question," wrote Thomas Balmer, and

> there is nothing to explain their particular position in this respect but the above mentioned prophecy. The fact that the aborigines of America, Australia, New Zealand,

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[43]McCord, *British-History, 1815-1906*, 301-02, 427-28.

[44]Senior, *The British-Israelites*, 118-26.

[45]Hanan and Aldersmith, eds., *British-Israel Truth*, 95.

> &c. are disappearing fast, and in a very short time will be extinct, proves the fulfilment of this prophecy. The attitude of the British Race is peculiarly different to that of other Nations, who had taken portions of the earth, with the Spaniards in Mexico, and the Portuguese, &c. in South America, this peculiarity is not observable, for they readily amalgamate and inter-marry with the aborigines of the land which they possess, which in no instance occurs with the British Race.[46]

Even Seeley, British-Israelites noted, remarked that in the case of Spain, the European lived in the midst of the natives while in the "English" colonies, the race supplanted the natives entirely.[47] Echoing other imperial writers, adherents lamented this result "from a sentimental point of view," but they also took pains to show that the natives had died out for the most part, not because of the lack of missionary work among them but in spite of it. "For centuries it has been the work of good men, aided and fostered by governments, to educate, to civilize, to Christianize these Gentile nations, but all to no purpose," explained Thomas MacDonald in 1898. "They are still fading away, and every effort of man has failed, is failing, to save even a small remnant alive of those once numerous people."[48] Ignoring the very real efforts of London and the colonial governments to remove native populations from the midst of settlements, many imperial writers and British Israelites preferred to ascribe this process to "natural law," "racial superiority," or, in the latter case, Divine command. For, "as much as we may regret [their extinction] indi-

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[46]Balmer, *The Israelitish Origin of the Anglo-Saxons*, 27.

[47]J. R. Seeley, *Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 44-45; quoted by Douglas, *Ephraim-England*, 16-17.

[48]Thomas A MacDonald, *The Mighty Conflict of the Ages. Mined from Bible Prophecy and Profane History* (London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1898), 138. See also Sir J. Robinson, *The Colonies and the Century*, 58; H. George, *Historical Geography of the British Empire*, 8; L. Rogers, *The Mystery Nation*, 21; *Daily Graphic* (London) 1 December, 1900.

vidually, we are quite unable to prevent it." Rather, Identity writers hoped that the British would soon recognize that not only is the Anglo-Saxon, in the words of Sir Charles Dilke, "the only extirpating race on earth," it was required to be so for a purpose higher than that of the human "good intentions" which sought to aid and protect the native inhabitants.[49]

Clearing these great tracts of land of the native populations opened them for the great multitude of Anglo-Saxons which would soon fill the earth. Abraham had been promised that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the heaven and the dust of the earth (Gen. xiii. 16 and Gen. xv. 3-6), and until the last years of the century this seemed to describe the Anglo-Saxon quite accurately. In the 1870s there were predictions that the race would more than double in the next century.[50] By the 1880s statistics indicated that the population of England alone would reach more than 123 millions by the year 2000.[51] W. H. Hatton, F.R.H.S. determined that "whilst the average increase of the other European nationalities has been about 50 per cent. [over the last eighty years], the increase of the English has been about 310 per cent. Consequently the Anglo-Saxon must dominate the world."[52] Imperial literature abounded with the marvelous recognition that the Anglo-Saxon was an expanding race, both at home and in the colonies. The vast open spaces of

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[49]Twentyman, *The British Empire*, 49-50; Sir Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain* (1869), quoted by J. H. Weldon, *The British Nation Proved to be the Remnant of Israel and Representatives of the Lost Ten Tribes, Being a Series of Lectures Delivered, 1879* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1887), 30-31.

[50]W. E. Axon "The Language of the Future," *Quarterly Journal of Science* 10 (July 1873): 367.

[51]"Alarming Statistics," *Times* (London), 6 September 1884.

[52]Hatton quoted in Twentyman, *The British Empire*, 37.

Canada, Australia, and even the United States were considered great reservoirs for the overspill of the race from Great Britain and for the prolific nature of it in the colonies.[53] More than the gates or the heathen empire, the white colonies were the great standard of Israel and the chief instruments of carrying out the mission of God's chosen people. They would, moreover, secure that the race of Israel would be the dominant force in the years to come. To maximize the power of the race the most pressing imperial duty lying before Britain, the *Banner of Israel* explained, was "to make sure that the young nations already incorporated are properly peopled--that is, peopled with men and women of our own stock, and fortunately, everything points to this being done."[54] Since they were also of the race of Israel, they too shared in the great privileges and obligations that such a heritage entailed.

For this reason, the relation of these colonies to Britain was one in which British-Israelites took a keen interest. Rather than requiring the tutelage which the heathen did, these future nations were to be recognized as partners in the great reign of Israel over the

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[53]*Good Words Magazine* (1866), quoted in Rankin, *The Anglo-Cimbri and Teutonic Races Proved to be the Lost Tribes of Israel*, 6-7; Seeley, *Expansion of England*, 58-60; M. G. Mulhall, "Our Colonial Empire," *Contemporary Review* 67 (May 1895) 632; George Payson, "Anglo-Saxon Supremacy," *Outlook* 53 (14 March 1896): 475; "The Expansion of the Empire" *The Spectator* 82 (18 February 1899): 228; Waldron, "Five Hundred Years of the Anglo Saxon," *McClures Magazine* 12 (November 1898): 185-86. Confidence in the Anglo-Saxon's continued fertility faltered, however, after the turn of the century and Britons wondered how they could continued to people the colonies with their own race if the birth-rate continued to fall. See "The Threatened Anglo-Saxon," *The Nation* 84 (7 March 1907): 215-16; Havelock Ellis, "The Future of the Anglo-Saxon," *The Independent Review* 2 (1904): 430-43.

[54]"Retrospective" *The Banner of Israel* 25 (28 December 1910): 543. See also, W. J. Sommerville, "Emigration: Parts 1 & 2," *The British Ecclesia* 1 (March 7 & April 1906): 182-84; 208-10.

planet. The Identity encouraged, therefore, the evolution of these colonies into at least Dominion status and eventually full nationhood. It hailed the idea of a federated Australia, for example, as a step towards the partnership of British-Israel and her daughter nations.[55] Their emergence as nations of their own, however, did not mean that British-Israelites wished to see the dismantling of the empire. On the contrary, as the empire continued to expand "in spite of all the efforts of our rulers to check it," a stronger union between these new nations seemed to be the most effective way to consolidate its power and "hence we find that Federation is on every tongue."[56] Adherents lent a sympathetic ear to the cause of the Imperial Federation League (founded 1884), seeing it as the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel that "a nation and a company of nations will be of thee" (Gen. xxxv. 11). "Turning to Britain and her Colonies," they proclaimed, "we meet the perfect counterpart [of this covenant]--promise in fulfillment, prophecy translated into current history."[57] Even the editor of the *Lyttelton Times* out of New Zealand recognized the applicability of this phrase to the coming nature of the empire. In an article quite critical of the current schemes of Imperial federation the editor suggested that, "'A nation and a company of nations'--the prophetic words descriptive of the promised glory of Israel in the latter days--is a phrase that may fitly be employed in describing the actual position of England and her so-called 'dependencies' to-day."[58] This writer suggested that

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[55]Angelo, *Ephraim; or, the Present Location of the Lost Tribes*, 52-53.

[56]*Israel's Hope and Destiny* 7 (31 December 1886): 247.

[57]V. M. Cox, "An Unassailable Position," *Israel's Hope and Destiny* 7 (31 December 1886): 202.

[58]"A Company of Nations," *The Lyttelton Times* (New Zealand) 9 August 1897.

Imperial Federation must be founded in sentimental ties rather than upon strict economic or commercial regulations or agreements. The motivating idea behind most federation schemes, including that of Joseph Chamberlain, was to turn the empire into a self-sufficient economic unit. This idea was beset by problems. Rising colonial nationalism made the Dominions generally wary of any federation scheme. The free trade policy of Britain, though tempered with the promise of imperial preference, still did not appeal to many colonial governments devoted to protectionist policies. Furthermore, no arrangement could be reached regarding the shape of a "federal" constitution. Combined with the contentious issue of financing imperial defense these issues prevented any general agreement on federation at imperial Conferences held in 1887, 1897, 1902, 1907, and 1911. Taking all of this into account, it seemed that the most puissant bond holding these new nations together was the sentiment of loyalty emanating from community of race, language, and tradition. Any imperial union, many came to believe, should be based primarily upon these ideas. The chronicler of the Imperial Conference of 1911, Richard Jebb, advocated such a scheme when he proposed what he called a "Britannic Alliance." Mutual trust, Jebb argued, rather than imperial government could best hold the alliance together. This sentiment, he believed, would naturally breed closer economic, military, and personal ties as each nation invested, both emotionally and physically, in the others.[59] The future of imperial cohesion depended more upon emotional and "organic" forces than on constructing burdensome governmental or economic structures.

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[59]Richard Jebb, *The Britannic Question* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), chap. 4.

A similar concept underlay the British-Israel position on federation. For the race to carry out its mission it must avoid bogging down in pedantic disputes over such issues as military financing or trade policy. It should, instead, recognize the ancestral and cultural links between its people (something which the Identity could facilitate) and foster a union based upon, in Lord Milner's phrase, "race patriotism."[60] Under divine guidance and a coming recognition of its racial inheritance, British-Israelites were confident that a federation of Anglo-Saxondom would "ere long be formed."[61] Far from being the scheme of manufacturing or capital interests, however, adherents believed that federation was an indispensable part of God's plane for Israel's dominion.[62] This federation, which would most likely include the United States, would help to ensure the peace of the world and, when the final battle between the forces of good and evil did occur, secure victory for the righteous.[63] "Will England have no allies at this terrible crisis," Herbert Aldersmith asked his listeners in 1896. "Assuredly she will, for who are the "young lions thereof," if they be not our colonies? See what strides have been made, since I last addressed you, towards the federation of the mother country with her colonies. . . . This is a dream no longer of so-called 'Anglo-Israelites,' but looked forward to by men of the world as the

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[60]*Times* (London), 27 July 1905; quoted in Richard Jebb, *The Empire In Eclipse* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1926), xiv.

[61]*Israel's Hope and Destiny* 5 (September 1884): 289-90.

[62]Rev. Robert Douglas, *Darkest Britain's Epiphany*, 175; idem, *Ephraim-England*, 36; Bertram de Weltden Weldon, *The Evolution of Israel*, 334.

[63]Martin Lyman Streator, *The Anglo-American Alliance in Prophecy, or, the Promises to the Fathers* (London: The Werner Co., 1900), 2: 252.

hope of the British race in the future."[64] Federation proved to be an elusive goal, however, no system ever proposed fully satisfied either Great Britain or the colonies. British-Israelites took comfort in the fact, at least, that during both the Boer War and World War I the colonial troops fought on the side of British interests. Here was a united empire, driven by the "instincts of an imperial race", fighting against the forces of evil as Aldersmith had hoped even if it had not attained any official form of consolidation.[65] The British-Israel idea of a federated empire was loose enough to allow repeated failures of politicians to bring such a scheme to fruition. The phrase "a company of nations" could legitimately describe anything from a tight bond of Federal union to a loose commonwealth of independent states. British-Israelites today still claim this promise for the modern Commonwealth but it hardly matches the grandeur of, or the pride inspired by, its imperial predecessor.

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[64]Aldersmith, *Coming Events in the East and the Return of the Jews to Palestine,* 14; also, idem, *The Fulness of the Nations*, 2d ed., 151-52. See also Author of Notes on Daniel VII, *Notes on Some Prophecies Indicating the Probable Relation Between England and Egypt in the Last Days* (London: James Nisbet, 1887), 530-31.

[65]Rev. Chancellor Denis Hanan, D.D., "Dying for the Empire," *The Anglo-Israel Almanck for 1902*, 62; Lancaster, *Prophecy, the War and the Near East*, 5th ed., viii-ix. Rev. James Simpson quoted the sermon which the Rev. Scott delivered to the first contingent of Canadian soldiers on the eve of their departure to South Africa. In extolling the goodness and unity of the empire, Scott proclaimed that, "it is no spirit of blind patriotism, nor is it with any sense of incongruity that I pass from the divine mission of the Hebrews of old to that of the Anglo-Saxon peoples to-day. We stand to-day as an empire comprising one-fifth of the human race, in the van of civilization. The charter of the world's freedom, once grasped by the warrior hands of ancient Israel, surely rests now in the keeping of England and her great daughter empire of the West. Israel's Sinaitic law is our law, Israel's God is our God, and with a wider conception of responsibility than Israel ever attained to, we go to the ends of the earth proclaiming human liberty and the Christ of human salvation." *God's Nation*, 139-40.

Readers of Identity works were bombarded, especially after 1880, with numbers, pictures, songs, and stories about the spread of British-Israel wealth and dominion.[66] Beyond just these "notable facts" of the race's glory, however, writers sought to show a difference between the British empire and its predecessors both in its extent and nature. Taking offense at Canon William Fremantle's suggestion that England enjoyed, "'[no] higher position of influence or prosperity than Prussia enjoys, or that Spain once enjoyed, among the nations of Western Europe,'" one author exploded:

> really this sort of twaddle is enough to make one believe in the stories of Rip Van Winkle, or the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus! Hear it, Shades of Pitt and Fox! Mark it well, O spirits of Wellington and Nelson, and of those more ancient heroes of high renown, who, under the Virgin Queen, bore Old England's flag farther than ever Roman eagle winged its flight.[67]

Other empires, formed from greed, craft, and brute force and directed by limited human goals, "ended where all human ambitions and passions must end, in decay and death."[68] The British empire was of a different nature. It was, in the word of the *Times*, "the great-

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[66]Examples of this are very numerous. Some of the most glaring instances can be found in, "Notable Facts for Anglo-Israelites: Our Empire," *Anglo-Israel Almanack for 1895*, 33; Philo-Israel, "The Multitude of Nations to Come From Abraham," *The Anglo-Israel Almanack for 1897*, 39-42; John S. Anderson, "Colonization," ibid., 43-46; H. Beckwith, "Straining at Gnats and Swallowing Camels" *Anglo-Israel Almanack for 1912*, 33-37; Garnier, *The Ten Tribes from Captivity Until Now*, 21-22; Odlum, *God's Covenant Man*, 13-28; Roberts, *British History Traced*, 57; Rogers, *Britain in History*, 13; Wild, *The Lost Ten Tribes and 1882*, 48. Rev. J. I. Jones published his, "Anglo-Israel Anthem," which he set to the music of the Welsh patriotic song, "Men of Harlech," in *Banner of Israel* 24 (28 February 1900): 99, while John M. W. Young, the organist of Lincoln Cathedral composed, "The Return to Israel to Palestine" (London: W. H. Guest, 1880).

[67]David, *Reply to Objections to the Israelitish Origin of the Anglo-Saxon People, Made by Canon Fremantle*, 18-19.

[68]Douglas, *Ephraim-England*, 29-30.

est and noblest Empire that Providence has permitted to exist on the face of the habitable globe, . . . still growing, still developing, still moving and working towards an unborn form and majesty."[69] This "unborn form", British-Israelites were convinced, would eventually center upon Palestine which would at last return to Israel's possession and become the capital of the British empire. For all the empire's majesty it would remain incomplete, in British-Israel thinking, until the land promised to Abraham and his descendants, "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. xv. 18) came under British control.

**Kings of the East**

For this to take place Britain would have to wrest control of the eastern Mediterranean from Turkey, which controlled it until the World War I, and withhold it from Russia or other powers, which jealously eyed the European holdings of the Ottoman Empire in anticipation of its imminent collapse. These issues, however, largely defined the ubiquitous Eastern Question which caused periodic crises in British foreign policy from the 1830s to the First World War. At the heart of British concern was the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe and the protection of its trade routes to India. British leaders worried that Russia would make a foray into the Ottoman's territories at the first signs of the Empire's predicted collapse, thus throwing the power structure of Europe hopelessly out of balance and threatening British interests. British policy in the area sought to prop up Turkish power, both diplomatically and financially, to stave off its demise as long as

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[69]*Times* (London), 3 February 1876; quoted in Rowbottom, *The Chosen People, England and Israel*, 18.

possible. After mid-century this support was directed largely out of British self-interest since much of the British Turcophilism which had existed in the early part of the century had begun to dwindle in the decade after the Crimean War of 1853-56.[70] By the mid-1870s, as a result of the revolts and massacres of Christians in Turkey's European holdings, it was dead. Britain now weighed its actions as to the Ottoman empire in terms of its own self interest, particularly the protection of the Suez Canal and Persian Gulf trade routes, exclusively. The decade culminated with the meeting of the great powers at the Congress of Berlin (1878), the outcome of which was largely influenced by British diplomatic efforts.[71] The Congress was a response to the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 which saw Russian forces march to Constantinople and effectively demand an end to Turkish control of its eastern European territories. The outcome of the Congress, however, significantly altered this plan. Although greatly weakened by the war, Turkey retained at least nominal control of many of its holdings in Europe. The Tsar's plans for a large Russian satellite state between the Black Sea and the Aegean, as outlined in the treaty of San Stefano (1878), were halted. Britain, under Disraeli, not only helped make certain that Russia would not control the trade of the eastern Mediterranean but also added the island of Cyprus to its empire to safeguard its own trade routes. Thus it had received what it had come for--protection of its interests in the area.

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[70]Alan Cunningham, "The Wrong Horse? Anglo-Ottoman Relations before the First World War," in *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century: Collected Essays*, ed. Edward Ingram (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 2: 227-28.

[71]For a complete analysis of Britain's role in the Eastern Crisis of the 1870s see Richard Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question, 1875-78* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

Directing British policy towards the Ottoman Empire and Near East until the early years of the twentieth century was an acute Russophobia.[72] Concerns that Russia might control Eastern Mediterranean trade routes and that she might make an advance into Afghanistan and northern India struck to the very heart of the British empire. Turkey, therefore, played mostly an incidental role. It was a useful buffer against Russian threats and for this reason should be supported, but nearly everyone knew that the "sick man of Europe" could never be a secure ally or formidable foe. Even the true foundation of British Turcophilism, it seems, was less admiration for Turkish rule or culture than fear of Russian expansion.[73] Britain depended upon the security which continued Ottoman rule brought to the area, but as seen with the purchase of majority interest in Suez in 1875, the acquisition of Cyprus in 1878, its protectorate over Egypt in 1882, and, after the Ottoman's collapse, the establishment of protectorates in Palestine and Mesopotamia, it also recognized that the weakened Ottoman state might not supply quite enough protection for its interest there. Two currents, therefore, defined Britain's relationship with the powers in the Near East in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fear of Russian advance dictated Britain's support for the continued existence, in modified form, of Turkish rule. Yet even British officials understood that they could not secure the survival of Turkey indefinitely and therefore they pursued policies to establish British control either of-

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[72]Marian Kent, "Great Britain and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1900-23," in, *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London: George Allan and Unwin, 1984), 172; also Norman Rich, *Why the Crimean War: A Cautionary Tale* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1991); Laurence Lafore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1965), 90.

[73]Allan Cunningham, "The Wrong Horse? Anglo-Ottoman Relations," 230.

ficially or trucially in the area. Both currents were directly connected to Britain's imperial security and thus the Eastern Question was largely an issue of empire.[74]

British-Israelism was, therefore, doubly interested in the role and progress of Britain in the Near East. As an imperial issue, the Eastern Question struck to the heart of the Identity's message of empire and as a situation in which Britain's relations with both Russia and Palestine were pivotal, it fit almost faultlessly within Biblical prophecy. Turkey's place in the whole matter, furthermore, was important but not a issue of great concern. Being an Islamic state, of course, made it an enemy of Christian Israel. John Wilson, the founder of the Identity, had petitioned the government in 1844 to end its support for the Ottoman Empire and to step in to protect Balkan Christians against Turkish persecution. This, he argued, was the responsibility of the Anglo-Saxon race since, as Israel, they were to be the defenders of Christ's kingdom.[75] But Islamic Turkey was not the real enemy in the area. It would eventually crumble, despite British aid, out of its own internal weaknesses and in fulfillment of the Scriptures. Turkey had simply been allowed to possess the Holy Land for a period of time until Israel was made ready to receive its inheritance. But as Israel began to make advances into the area, such as those in Cyprus and Egypt, she would inspire the wrath and jealousy of her true foe, described in the

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[74]It was Russian threats to Turkey which inspired the famous music hall song that introduced the word "jingoism" into the language. "We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do/ We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too./ We've fought the Bear before, and while we're Britons true,/ The Russians shall not have Constantinople.

[75]John Wilson, *The True Solution of the Eastern Question: England's Duty in Relation to the Christians of Turkey* (London: W. H. Guest, 1877), 17-19.

prophecies as "the Prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal" (Ezek. xxxviii. 2-3)--or, as British-Israelites and others pointed out, Russia.

According to British-Israel thought, Israel's expansion into the area began to culminate with the Congress of Berlin. When Russia expected to settle the Eastern Question with the Treaty of San Stefano, hoping, "no doubt, eventually to seize the great gate itself (Constantinople), and thereby the splendid heritage of the holy places," they apparently had left out "one material factor in the calculations": British-Israel. "The British," Philo-Israel confidently predicted, "being Israel, are destined shortly to become the arbiters of the Eastern Question."[76] Disraeli's ability to stem Russian plans for a Bulgarian satellite state and possession of Constantinople was hailed as prophecy fulfilled. Along with the curtailing of Russian power came an extension of British power through the acquisition of Cyprus which "constitutes the true 'Gate' of Palestine."[77] John Guilder Shaw rapidly composed "A Song of Praise for Israel's New Gate--The Island of Cyprus," (10 July 1878) in which he exhorts Britons to awake and "Russia, beware!" Israel, the "'Kings of the East,' [78] God hath opened your way," he announces, now that Cyprus placed the land

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[76]*Banner of Israel* 2 (12 June 1878); quoted in Savile, *Anglo-Israelism and the Great Pyramid*, 54-55.

[77]Philo-Israel, *Are the English People the Lost Tribes of Israel*, 4th ed. (London: W. H. Guest, 1878), 4.

[78]This Scriptural term (Rev. xvi. 12) referred to the power who would control Near East from Palestine to India in the latter days. For use and analysis of this term see: *"The Kings of the East;" An Exposition of the Prophecies. Determining from Scripture and from History, the Power for Whom the Mystical Euphrates is Being 'Dried Up;' With an Explanation of Certain Prophecies Concerning the Restoration of Israel*, 2nd ed. enl. (London: Seeleys, 1849); John Gairdner, *"The Kings of the East," and the Great Day of Jezreel* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1906); Hilda G. Gregg, *The Kings of the East: A Romance of the Near East* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1907).

of Canaan under Britain's watchful eye and protection.[79] Without getting bogged down in many of the smaller points of politics and diplomacy, some of which, such as the failure of Disraeli's 1880 campaign and the inability of Britain to obtain Constantinople, actually threw wrenches into British-Israel prophecy, adherents preferred to take a longer view of the situation. Thus when Egypt came under British sway in 1882 and Palestine and Mesopotamia became protectorates in the years after World War I, British-Israel writers made these imperial advances fit within prophetic utterances.[80]

Outside British-Israel circles, as well, the dynamic of the Eastern Question lent itself to prophetic interpretation. Its focus in the Promised Land and the general feeling among students of prophecy of the approaching last days led them to consider the crisis in the east as being fundamental to the ultimate fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. "The greatest political problem of the day is the solution of the Eastern difficulty," Walter Scott wrote in 1877, "one which for many years has puzzled the wisest and most sagacious politicians and statesmen in Europe." Their efforts, he continued, would remain largely in vain since it was not in the wisdom of mankind to solve this problem. Rather it was only, "the

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[79]Shaw, *Britain (or Israel)*, 45-47.

[80]Commander L. G. A. Roberts, R. N., *Egypt and the British Fleet: The Probable Outcome of the Eastern Question Now Begun, Derived from the Word of God* (London: W. H. Guest, 1882); Author of Notes on Daniel VII, *England and Egypt*, 314, 473; Lancaster, *The British Empire, The War, and The Promised Land* (1915); Rev. William Pasco Goard, *The Empire in Solution, with Chapters on Anglo-Saxon Civilization; Russia; and Palestine, and Who Should Possess It*, 2nd ed. (London: Covenant, 1931). As early as 1846 the non-Identity author Rev. Thomas Rawson Birks predicted that Britain would one day possess Egypt in order to fulfill its probable role as the force of good in the final battle. Birks, *The Two Later Visions of Daniel: Historically Explained* (London: Seeley, Burnside, and Seeley, 1846), 334.

blessed pages of the Word of God, which afford full, positive, and divine instruction upon the great Eastern Question."[81] The Question revolved solely around a coming conflict between two peoples, Scott determined, the Jews and the Russians: the forces of God against those of evil.[82] Among non-Identity prophetic writers, Britain's role in this struggle was often ambiguous. Robert Roberts, an avid opponent of British-Israelism and the nemesis of Edward Hine, believed that Britain would play a critical part in the coming crisis, but as the restorers of Israel not as Israel itself.[83] Professor Hall and others took Britain to be the prophetic Tarshish, a nation of merchants who would transport Israel back to its homeland.[84] The anonymous author of *The Coming Collision Between England and Russia* came closest to the Identity stance when he declared the England would occupy the role of prophetic Israel in the battle but, he cautioned, it was not the true racial Israel. Quoting an article by Professor Monier Williams in the *Contemporary Review* of January 1879, the author explains that even those unconscious of the prophetic implications of the Eastern Question recognized that "two mighty empires, each gravitating to-

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[81]W. S., *The Eastern Question: and What the Bible Says About Coming Events*, 3d ed., rev. and enl. (London: Alfred Holness, 1877), 3, 6.

[82]Ibid., 13-17; also, Walter Scott, *The Eastern or Jewish Question Considered: and, What the Bible Says About Coming Events*, 7th ed. enl. (London: Alfred Holness, 1882), in which he incorporates the Congress of Berlin and the troubles in Egypt.

[83]Robert Roberts, *Prophecy and the Eastern Question: Being an Exhibition of the Light Shed by the Scriptures of Truth on the Matters Involved in the Crisis that has Arrived in Eastern Affairs, Showing the Approaching Fall of the Ottoman Empire, War Between England and Russia, the Settlement of the Jews in Syria under British Protectorate* (London: F. Pitman, 1877).

[84]R. Hall, *Signs of the Times. England's Mission. Russia's Destiny and Final Overthrow*, 11-15; Theta, *The Destiny of Russia, as Foretold By God's Prophets* (Chicago: Thomas Wilson, 1878), 89-91; both Roberts and Scott also admit this possibility.

wards the other with irresistible force," would soon collide in the Near East.[85] In the end, England, as protector of the Jews, would be victorious. If ambiguity surrounded the role of Britain in these works, none existed about Russia. Russophobia dominated both prophetic and political analyses of eastern events up until about 1910, when Germany replaced Russia as Britain's *bête noire* in the area. At times, the line between these two approaches blurred. "Lord Roberts, in concluding his recent speech in the House of Lords on the subject of the British policy in India, frankly avowed himself a Russophobe," the *Lyttelton Times* reported,

> "if Russophobe means one who is convinced that the force of civilization will compel Great Britain and Russia to eventually meet in Asia." . . . From the House of Lords to the old Hebrew prophets is a long cry; but it is curious and significant to find a British General practically agreeing with the Jewish seers, who foretold that the final battle for the mastery of the world would be fought somewhere in Asia.[86]

The author continued to explain that, according to Ezekiel chapters xxxviii and xxxix, the "Prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal," which Dr. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* identified as the empire of Russia would come against Israel out of the north.[87] Not only was there no

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[85]M. A. of Cambridge, *The Coming Collision*, 46-7.

[86]"Current Topics," *Lyttelton Times* (New Zealand) 6 June 1898. According to the *Contemporary Review*, European involvement in Asia consisted of "two Powers, England and Russia. The Empires of Britain and Muscovy have the overlordship, the one of the South the other of the North, while a narrow ribbon of mountainous network alone remains between the outposts of the Cossack and the passes guarded by the Sepoy." The capitalization of the terms "North" and "South" echoed the scriptural prophecy of the kings of the North and South who would clash in Asia at the end times. "The European Partners in Asia," *Contemporary Review* 67 (May 1895): 610.

[87]The writer in the *Dictionary* states that "this early Biblical notice of so great an empire [the Russian] is doubly interesting from its being a solitary instance." The correlation of "Rosh" with Russia was straightforward. Some confusion existed, however, with the terms "Meshech" and "Tubal". Prophetic students determined that Meshech referred either to Moschi, the Muskai (an ancient people on the eastern border of the Black

doubt that this Prince was the Tsar of "all the Russias" but "suffice it to say that it is proved either that Britain is Israel, or that no nation in existence answers to the description of that which Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied." That prophecy was so strikingly borne out by modern events had thus been noticed outside British-Israel or other prophetic circles.

For British-Israelites, however, there was no confusion about the role of Britain in or the importance of the entire Eastern Question. "We are now brought face to face with the 'Eastern Question'," Eleanor Rush explained just after the Congress of Berlin,

> which, in a few words may be thus stated:--Which European or Asiatic nation shall have, in the future, the greatest power in the dominions of the Turks which the Sultans have misruled for so long a time, and which have now become 'the debatable ground' of Europe? . . . You now have the question in plain language, and to you who have read what has gone before there is no difficulty in giving the correct answer. The British nation--the Israelites--with the Jews, will have power above all others in "the East," and they are best fitted, by the special teaching of God, to give a good government to all men, and have a wise care of those whom he puts under their charge, who are ignorant and careless of His laws.[88]

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Sea then in the Russian empire), or Moscow, while by Tubal the prophets meant another ancient people in modern Russia's territory, the Tibareni or Tuplai, or the chief city of Siberia, Tobol'sk. *Dr. William Smith's Dictionary of the Bible; Comprising Its Antiquities, Biography, Geography, and Natural History*, American ed. (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1872), s.v. "Rosh," by Rev. Arthur P. Stanley, D.D.; Birks, *The Two Later Visions of Daniel*, 332-333; Rev. James Neil, *Palestine Re-Peopled; or, Scattered Israel's Gathering. A Sign of the Times*, 3rd ed. rev. (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1877), 90-93; G. H. Pember, *The Great Prophecies Concerning the Gentiles, the Jews, and the Church of God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881), 219-221; W. S., *The Eastern Question*, 15; M. A. of Cambridge, *Coming Collision*, 8-9; Roberts, *Prophecy and the Eastern Question*, 24-25.

[88]Rush [pseud. Aei], *The Answer to the Eastern Question, as Shown in the Identity of the British With Israel* (London: S. W. Partridge, 1878), 27; also idem, *The New Old Story: With a Slight Introduction to a Marvellous Puzzle. With an Appendix on the Eastern Question* (London: S. W. Partridge, 1877).

An issue of "primary importance" for the nation, forcing itself upon the attention "of the thoughtful and thoughtless," upon the minds of "the philosopher and the *flâneur*, the Christian and the Atheist" alike, the Eastern Question was easily answered, adherents determined, if the nation would come to understand that, "THE BRITISH NATION HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH THE LOST TRIBES OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL!"[89] The East belonged to Britain, who, being the forces of God, must defend it from the influence of evil. Here again, Russia dominated the scene. "Two empires stand facing each other in the East to-day as rivals for supremacy," Oxonian wrote in 1890. "The world looks on and wonders what the end shall be. It cannot be much longer delayed; for each years brings the two frontiers nearer, and already the two spheres of influence meet, and even at points overlap."[90] Accepting that the "Rosh" of prophecy signaled the Russian empire, "we are prepared to prove that this antagonist to Russia [in the battle for the Holy Land] is of the Abrahamic racial Israel," the Anglo-Saxon race.[91] Dominant once again in the British-Israel approach, and not so in other prophetic interpretations of the Eastern Question, were the two ideas of empire and race. From a prophetic point of view, the Holy Land was the most important allotment of the British-Israel empire. Possession of it was deemed indispensable. Moreover, along with claiming, as they had always done, a racial

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[89]C. W. E., *The Identity of the British Nation with The Lost Ten Tribes of the House of Israel: The Clue to the Eastern Question* (London: W. H. Guest, [1880]), 2.

[90]Oxonian, *Russia Japhet; The Muscovite, the Cossack, and the Mongol: A Detailed Identification of the Power whose Doom is Foretold in Ezekiel XXXVIII with the Empire of the Czars* (London: F. W. Parry & Co., 1890), 1.

[91]Rev. Hibbert Newton, B. A., *Anglo-Israel and His First Prince For the Holy Land Shown From Scripture Prophecy, with Strains For Palestine, and Notes on the Enemy* (London: W. H. Guest, 1902), v-vi.

link between the Anglo-Saxons and Israelites, British-Israelites also connected Russia to Rosh, Meshech and Tubal not only prophetically, but historically and racially. "The rivalry of Britain and Russia," according to Oxonian, was, therefore, "not merely the struggle for supremacy between two great empires; it is the latter stage of an age-old contest between two races [Shemetic and Japhetic] and two principles."[92]

Diplomatic and political concerns, however, are always in a state of flux. As Germany replaced Russia as the focus of concern in the area, the British-Israel interpretation of Eastern events had to make appropriate adjustments. Commander Roberts suggested that Russia and Germany would form a confederacy against Israel, the one as Prince of Rosh the other as Assyria, thus reviving an old British-Israel idea of Germans as descendants of the Assyrians.[93] T. A. Gregg, writing for Toronto's *Mail and Empire* in 1913, also foresaw a potential league of enemies preying upon the Holy Land after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Chief among these were Russia, Germany, Austria, and Italy. No matter who the enemy was, Gregg decided, "if this Anglo-Saxon race, to which many of us have the honor to belong, be God's chosen people, lost Israel redeemed and revealed, as so many honest men and women aver and hold to as tangible fact," then the land would eventually become theirs and they will be victorious over all those who coveted it.[94] By

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[92]Oxonian, *Russia Japhet*, 10-11. For historical connections of these ancient peoples to the modern Russians see Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, 4: 182-84.

[93]Rev. L. G. A. Roberts, *Israel in the Book of Revelation* (London: R. Banks and Son, 1911), 196-98.

[94]T. A. Gregg, "The Drying Up of the Ottoman Power: The Doom of the Gentiles," *The Mail and Empire* (Toronto) 13 January 1913.

1915, Britain's war-time alliance with Russia made it difficult to prophesy against it. Germany and Austria, now became the primary enemies.[95] Capriciousness, however, was not a common British-Israel trait. Russia, which seemed so clearly referenced in Scripture as the enemy of Israel and which still was feared despite the alliance, was not easily given up. Augusta Cook, who by the First World War had become one of the most prominent British-Israel lecturers, still considered it possible the Britain and Russia would eventually come into conflict over Palestine. "If this interpretation proves to be correct," she recognized, "there must come a temporary peace in the present war in order to enable events so to adjust themselves to turn Russia, our present ally, into our chief foe at the great battle of Armageddon."[96] Fortunately for British-Israel designs, the Revolution of 1917 took Russia out of the war and placed it again into the camp of Britain's potential enemies.[97]

World War I all but confirmed a number of British-Israel contentions in regards to Palestine and the Near East. "I ask you," Aldersmith wrote as early as 1896, "what is

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[95]F. D., *The War and the Prophets* (London: Morgan, Son & Co., 1915), 38-53.

[96]Augusta Cook, *Light From the Book of Daniel*, 220-21; idem, *The Covenant Oath of Jehovah: Its Beginning, Meaning and End. Verbatim Report of a Course of Twelve Lectures Delivered in the Central Hall, Westminster*, with an Introduction by Rev. Dinsdale T. Young (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1919), 124.

[97]Colonel George William Deane, *Britannia's Epiphany: Reconciliation of the Teachings of Christendom and British Israelism*, with a foreword by the Rev. George S. Lee (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1919), 60. By the era of the Cold War, Russia had returned as Britain's primary foe. In 1979, General Sir Walter Walker, former commander of NATO and Patron of the British-Israel World Federation, warned adherents at their annual Congress that the Soviet threat was the greatest concern facing the West. "Walter Walker's fear over Soviet 'nukes,'" *Daily Telegraph* (London), 8 October 1979.

more likely, in a worldly point of view, than that Great Britain will restore the Jews to Palestine? Is it not a fact that the Anglo-Saxon race are more kindly disposed towards that oppressed people than any other Power? . . . We already hold Cyprus through the action of a Jew [Disraeli]; and, surely, when the Turkish Power fails over Palestine (as it soon must) we shall not allow Russia to set foot in the Holy Land, though she has her heart thereon."[98] In late 1914, with Turkey's formal entrance into the war, British-Israel thoughts turned directly towards Palestine. After so many years of being Britain's friend that Turkey would now throw its lot in with the Central Powers, and thus make it possible for Britain to annex the Holy Land as the spoils of war, was described as miraculous.[99] Steady advances in the Near East, except for the debacle at the Dardanelles which once again thwarted Identity hopes for a British Constantinople, were greeted with ebullience. British acquisition of Turkish territory prior to the war (Cyprus, Egypt, and the Sudan) secured for them the southern boundary of the Promised Land. "We have since the war," a British-Israelite wrote in 1915,

> entered upon the northern boundary, for by the occupation of Basra (or Bussorah), the old Edomite capital, the gate or strategic position at the mouth of the Euphrates, and by the occupation, too, of Kurnah, at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates, we practically control the waters of the Euphrates district. Nearly one-half of the Promised land is now ours, and we must, perforce, go on until the iniquitous Turk is done away, when the time of the Gentile dominion of the Holy places will be ended, and

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[98]Aldersmith, *Coming Events in the East and the Return of the Jews to Palestine*, 12. Also, Surgeon-General James MacGrigor Grant, *A Summary of Anglo-Israelite Teaching and the Scripture Proofs on Which it Rests. Being a Reply to Opponents*, 2d ed. rev. (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1890), 23.

[99]E. N. Dixon, *The Divine Plan in the Government of the World* (London: W. Hardwick, 1915), 27.

> Israel (or Britain) will be in full possession of the vast territory promised to their forefathers, and take back with them their brethren the Jews.[100]

The Balfour Declaration of November 1917 and the British occupation of Jerusalem and conquest of Palestine in the following months, not to mention Britain's victory in the war a year later, laid the sticks of prophecy in neat row.[101] It seemed remarkable that Dr. Joseph Wild's predictions from 1880, that Britain will "have to open up Palestine, help the Jews return and protect them . . . hence God will give her the land," had been so literally fulfilled.[102] Along with its importance for the protection of Judah and the reunion of all Israel, securing the Holy Land had a two-fold imperial purpose. First and foremost, the occupation of Palestine, "the centre of the Prophetic Earth," represented God's fulfillment of the ultimate promise to Israel, possession of the land of their fathers.[103] Secondly, holding Palestine and the Near East was highly functional in that it secured British hegemony in the area and thus ensured its routes to India and other eastern possessions.[104]

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[100]Ibid., 13-14. Also G. H. Lancaster, *The British Empire, The War, and the Promised Land* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1915), 54.

[101]A. F. Wilson, *Our Predestined British Empire: Israel in the British Race*, 2d ed. (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1918), vii; Radnor, *Notes and Queries on the Origin of British-Israel*, 15; G. H. Lancaster, *Prophecy, the War, and the Near East*, 4th ed., vii-ix; ibid., 5th ed., 240.

[102]Joseph Wild, *The Future of Israel and Judah: Being the Discourses of the Lost Tribes, From "How and When the World Will End"* (London: Robert Banks, 1880), 102.

[103]John Dunham-Massey, *Tamar Tephi: The Jewish Princess, or the Maid of Destiny* (London: William Hardwick, 1918), 81; John Garnier, *The Coming End Times of the Gentiles* (London: Robert Banks and Son, 1917), 27-28; John Handcock, *God's Dealings with the British Empire* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1916), 4-5.

[104]James Rankin, *The Anglo-Cimbri and Teutonic Races Proved to Be the Lost Tribes of Israel*, 22; Aldersmith, *Coming Events in the East*, 12; Deane, *Britannia's Epiphany*, 60.

The Eastern Question had thus been answered. Israel had dislodged Turkey, the racial descendants of Edom (an enemy of Israel) and now ruled as the "Kings of the East" and most British-Israelites confidently expected that Jerusalem would replace London as the capital of the British empire.[105] Their patience having been rewarded in some many other instances, adherents waited patiently for this transfer to take place. Curiously and conveniently enough, at the time of the formation of the British-Israel World Federation in 1919 imperial events had aligned themselves, for all intents and purposes, with Identity theory.

**Imperial Difficulties Answered: The United States and Ireland**

Britain's imperial story, of course, was not one of unmitigated success. Yet British-Israelites either passed lightly over smaller setbacks such as the massacre of British forces at Isandhlwana during the Zulu Wars and the disasterous first months of the Boer War, or pointed out that the forces of Israel were ultimately rewarded with victory.[106] Two important and troublesome occasions in Britain's expansion, however, were not so easily disposed. In 1775, British forces took up arms against rebellious colonies in America and were defeated eight years later by an American-French-Spanish alliance. The thirteen colonies gained their independence and the so-called First British Empire received a colossal blow. This was a strange occurrence indeed if the British empire were the invinci-

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[105]Lord Fisher expected that the imperial government would in future ages, "meet in Jerusalem, the capital of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel whom we are without a doubt." *Memories*, 223; also, "A Fine Old Hen," *Times* (London), 7 May 1919.

[106]See "Obituary: A Rorke's Drift Hero, Henry Hook," *The Banner of Israel* 29 (5 April 1905), 154. Hook, apparently, "took a great interest in our grand Truth, and was a constant reader of the Banner of Israel."

ble empire of Israel. Closer to home, the placation of Ireland remained elusive. Irish difficulties increased as the century wore on even though Britain seemed to be successfully handling almost every other area of colonial administration. That small Ireland should remain such a large and consistent "thorn in England's side" was a significant enough curiosity to warrant special attention from Identity writers and thinkers.[107] Relying upon their mainstay of racial identity and imperial vision, British-Israelites provided ingenious and acceptable solutions to these imperial problems.

The United States presented a dilemma to Identity theorists. Though officially separate from the British Empire, America and Britain shared a community of language, heritage and, many believed, race. Americans, then, clearly had to be of Israel but, since they had not only severed their ties with Britain but prospered because of it, they must be a clearly distinct unit. America, as a special case of Anglo-Saxon prowess, required a correlative in a unique segment of Israel. For this reason the United States was widely believed to be Manasseh.[108] Of the original twelve tribes, the tribe of Joseph was divided into two segments named for his sons Manasseh and Ephraim. At the moment of his death, the patriarch Joseph called his sons to his bed to deliver his inheritance to them.

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[107]David Thompson, *Woodbrook* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), 102, quoted in Daphne B. Watson, "The Cross of St. George: The Burden of Contemporary Irish Literature," *Literature and Imperialism*, ed. Robert Giddings (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 30.

[108]This idea's most important proponent was the Rev. Dr. Wild who wrote and lectured extensively on this subject. For a concise treatment of his ideas see Wild, *Manasseh and the United States: An Essay Delivered in the Union Congressional Church, Brooklyn, NY, before the Israel Identification Society* (London: Robert Banks, 1880).

When they arrived he crossed his arms and laid his right hand upon the head of his younger son Ephraim. To him Joseph bestowed the blessings and made him, in essence, his first born. Promising his younger son that he would be the father of a company of nations, Joseph also foretold that Manasseh should also become a great and distinct people but "truly his younger brother shall be greater than he" (Gen. xlvii. 19). Ephraim, by inheriting his father's patrimony, became the head of the tribe of Joseph while the children of Manasseh formed a quasi thirteenth tribe. Separate from his brother but of the same stock, promised greatness but not parity, Manasseh exhibited the characteristics of the United States suggesting that the two were identical.[109]

America's independence, furthermore, had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah and thus was an inevitable and necessary event. Britain's resistance to it and the shedding of kindred blood on account of it was the regrettable result from its blindness to its own identity: "the independence of these colonies should have been an event with England's full consent and without recourse to arms."[110] Israel had been told through Isaiah that its colonization of the world would be interrupted by such an event, British-Israelites believed. Israel's isles would grow to narrow for their population and thus it would establish colonies for its children. Israel, however, would experience a colonial loss. "The children which thou shall have, *after thou hast lost the other*, shall *again* say in thine ears,

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[109]E. A. Reep, *The Israel of God, Who Are They*, 3rd ed. (London: Robert Banks, 1901), 4.

[110]Simpson, *God's Nation*, 115.

The place it too straight [narrow] for me" (Isa. xlix. 19-20).[111] Here was the prophetic junction between the first and second British empires. Despite a loss of a portion of their children, Israel would once again find it necessary to send its scions to people the earth. Though the British empire retained its dominance, America had become a separate and great people, "the second great Anglo-Saxon Empire of the world. Circumstantial evidence points strongly to the fact that in Great Britain is to be found the Ephraimic Empire, and, in the United States, that of Manasseh."[112] Contained here are two very powerful imperial ideas. First, it included the United States in the great "Anglo-Saxondom" which many imperial enthusiasts saw as the last best hope for the peace of the world, and second it retained the hope that no matter how strong the United States became Greater Britain would remain dominant. Finally, that the number thirteen should be so prominent in America and its symbols (the original number of colonies, the stripes in the flag, the levels of the pyramid on the Great Seal) was a further clue to America's identity as the thirteenth tribe of Israel.[113]

Answered in this way, the problem of the political independence of America largely dissipated. Not all British-Israelites were convinced, however. Though the skeptics

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[111]The emphasized portions of this reference are those of Edward Hine, *Forty Seven Identifications*, 23-24. See also Wild, *The Lost Ten Tribes and 1882*, 48-49, where similar portions are stressed.

[112]Danvers, *Israel Revividus*, 268.

[113]The American military professor at Yale, Charles A. L. Totten, fully developed this idea of the symbology of America and Manasseh in Totten, *Our Inheritance in the Great Seal of "Manasseh", the United States of America: Its History and Heraldry, and Its Signification Unto the Great People thus Sealed* (New Haven, CT: Our Race Publishing Co., 1897).

raised a number of potential difficulties of this interpretation, the most glaring problems were the racial incongruities. Did it make any sense, the Rev. Robert Douglas asked approaching the subject from his "Teutonic" standpoint, that the modern American, an amalgam of many peoples from Europe, could represent a single tribe? Was it not more likely, that America was a place where the numerous tribes of Israel from northern Europe (i.e. Britain, Germany, Scandinavia, and Ireland) would be gathered together and that the number thirteen so prominent there represented all thirteen tribes not only the thirteenth. To contend that the United States is only Manasseh, Douglas concluded, "is not to commend the subject of the Identity to sensible and educated minds."[114] The Rev. Wild countered such objections with the contention that, "America is God's great providential stomach in which all these different peoples are digested and converted into Manassehites," as shown by its motto *E Pluribus Unum.*[115] Though this was not too far removed from the commonly held opinion that stronger races absorbed weaker ones, a number of British-Israel writers and critics found it absurd or misguided. Other more homogenous peoples, some argued, such as the Japanese or Scottish better fitted the role of Manasseh.[116] It also seemed strange, from a racial point of view, that someone in

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[114]Douglas, *God and Greater Britain*, 13-14.

[115]Wild, *Manasseh and the United States*, 16.

[116]Savile, *Anglo-Israelism & the Great Pyramid*, 65-66. By 1905, Japan was proposed as a part of Israel on account of its growing power and influence and its recent alliance with Britain. Malach, "Splendid Isolation: The British--Ephraim-Israel. The Japanese--Manasseh-Israel," *The British Ecclesia* 1 (October 1905), 54-56; William Gordon Mackendrick, *The Destiny of America, with an Appendix: Who are the Japanese?* (Boston: A. A. Beauchamp, 1921); Edward Odlum, *Great Britain Great* (London: Covenant Publishing, 1921), 12-15. Also M. Macleod, *Korea and the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, with Korean, Japanese and Israelitish Illustrations* (Yokahama: C. Levy and the Sei

England would be considered an Ephraimite while at home but should he or she migrate to America would become a Manassehite. Though this was often answered with the contention that their choice to migrate was a Providential drive to reunite with their fellow Manassehites, such explanations rarely convinced doubters.[117] Despite these very real objections, the opinion of the majority of adherents, and the official view of the British-Israel World Federation, remained that the United States represented the tribe of Manasseh, and thus its independence was inevitable and in no way incongruent with the temporal blessings and colonial power of British-Israel.[118]

Ireland came with its own problems. First and foremost were the governmental difficulties. Crafting a solution to the constitutional questions surrounding British rule in Ireland was a bitterly divisive activity throughout the century. Gladstone's two Irish Home Rule bills (1886 and 1892) which would have given Ireland its own legislature met with defeat after highly contentious debates. The constitutional problems with Ireland, furthermore, did not end even after the southern counties severed all ties with Britain in

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Shi Bunsha Co., 1879). Rev. A. B. Grimaldi, *Manasseh in Scotland: A Biblical and Historical Study* (London: Robert Banks and Co., 1916). Oxonian, however, found that the Scottish were the most successful of Britons in colonizing activities. In a seven part series he explained how he believed the Scots to be Ephraim not Manasseh. "Ephraim the Scot; Parts 1-7," *The Messenger* 5 (1890). The colonizing aptitude of the Scots is explored in John M. MacKenzie, "Essay and Reflection: On Scotland and Empire," *The International History Review* 15 (November 1993): 714-39.

[117]Wild, *Manasseh and the United States*, 11.

[118]In the British-Israel World Federation Headquarters in London to this day hangs a large painting depicting Joseph's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh. Flying over Ephraim is the Union Jack while the flag of the United States hovers over Manasseh. The Secretary of the Federation, however, told this author that he considered this idea a mistake on racial grounds and that Manasseh was most likely to be found in Scotland.

1949. These political difficulties were not lost on British-Israelites. They were compounded, moreover, by racial and religious ones. Political incompatibility was often attributed to racial division, with the Irish widely believed to be a different, inferior, and intractable race.[119] The predominance of Catholicism in the otherwise largely Protestant British Isles further evidenced the foreigness, troublesomeness, and threat of Ireland. British possessions, however, were a patrimony from God and should not be such a constant nuisance. If the British-Israel theory were to stand then the troubles with Ireland must either disappear or be explained as a situation mandated by race and prophecy. The former option being unrealistic, British-Israelites attempted the latter.

In British-Israel thinking, the island of Ireland contained two distinct races. The people of Ulster were largely the descendants of the Israelite tribe of Dan or the Tuatha de Danaan and therefore linked racially to the other peoples of Great Britain. Those of the south, however, were the remnants of the irritants of ancient Israel, the Phoenicians or Canaanites. God had commanded His people Israel to remove the Canaanites from their land. Israel, however, found the work of displacing them too difficult and decided that they could live with them more or less peacefully. This, however, incurred God's wrath. By failing to carry out the command, Identity writers explained, the Israelites would be forced to forever suffer the Canaanites as "pricks in your eyes [and] thorns in your sides" (Num. xxxiii. 55), as a reminder of their disobedience.[120] Truly a no more fitting de-

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[119]The seminal study of British racial prejudice against the Irish is L. P. Curtis' *Anglo-Saxons and Celts* (1968).

[120]The idea of the Irish as Canaanites dates back to least the Civil War of the seventeenth century. Stephen D. Todd, "The Conquest of Canaan: A Study of Oliver Cromwell

scription of the Irish, from a British point of view, could be offered. "The Identity declares the people of the South of Ireland to be descendants of the Canaanites, who spoke the Phoenician language, having an alphabet of sixteen letters. The Irish language is identical with the Phoenician, containing the veritable sixteen letters. They themselves boast of this descent. There are many ethnological proofs that they are so descended."[121] Tradition attributed the origin of the name 'Fenian' to the ancient Irish population *fené*, or Phoenician.[122] The idea of Colonel Vallancy and others that the Phoenicians had colonized Ireland was here fleshed out into its prophetic consequences. These people had been providentially brought to Ireland to vex Israel in their new home. "These are the Fenians," W. H. Mason wrote, "a corruption of the Phenicians [sic], the occupants chiefly of the South of Ireland. Not from these, but from the descendants of the former [the Tuatha de Danaan of the north], come the great captains in the arts of war and peace, who have shed lustre on the Irish name; while the malcontent Fenians are the natural issue of the debased idolaters of Canaan of old."[123] Idolatry was still being practiced by these Canaanites only instead of the Baal worship in which they engaged in Palestine, they now

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and His Use of the Old Testament to Justify the Irish Campaign," (M.A. thesis, Baylor University, 1993).

[121]Hine, *Forty Seven Identifications*, 27. Also, Balmer, *The Israelitish Origin of the Anglo-Saxons*, 61-62.

[122]Robert Gairdner, *Bible Lessons and Reflections* (London: Robert Banks, 1883), 137.

[123]W. H. Mason, *The Truth of God Demonstrated by the British Nation* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1902), 78; Dunham-Massey, *Tamar Tephi*, vi-vii.

were idolaters of Rome. The racial descent of the Irish from the Canaanites thus explained all the political, racial, and religious problems of Ireland in the British empire.

Despite the fact that the Irish were of a different race and prone to cause Britain trouble for all time, British-Israelites were adamant in their opposition to Home Rule or any kind of separation.[124] Capitulation to Irish demands for self-rule, no matter how much of a nuisance the Fenians or other nationalists made of themselves, was out of the question. Israel must not be bullied by those whom God had designated as its servants. Any wavering on British sovereignty over Ireland set a dangerous precedent. "The advocates of 'Home Rule' are now pressing the figment of what they term 'Political Justice'," British-Israelites were told. Yet this idea "could with equal reason be demanded by every other portion of the Empire, with disastrous results, it is time for every true Israelite to take a decided stand in defence of his nation inheritance."[125] Ireland, as part of the empire, was destined to remain in British hands forever and all attempts to change this were misguided. The annoyances and tribulations which the Irish caused were the result of their racial descent and not of colonial mismanagement or injustice. British control of the island must therefore remain firm. Tighter control over the troublesome Irish was the Identity's answer to the 'Irish Question'. This policy was applicable to both Great Britain and the entire Anglo-Saxon world where the Irish were now making their presence felt.

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[124]Taking a rather different stand, the British-Israelite Edward Fox Angelo believed that the entire Irish population was descended from the tribe of Dan. Dan, he continued, was the most stubborn and recalcitrant of the tribes and only when it stopped rejecting its unity with the rest of Israel could it hope to be treated as an equal partner. *Ephraim; or, the Present Location of the Hebrew Tribes*, 29.

[125]"Home Rule," *The Northern British Israel Review* 2 (October 1912): 115.

Irish-Canaanites were destined to plague Anglo-Saxon-Israelites wherever the latter settled. Irish immigrants in the colonies and America must be dealt with in the same way as in Britain, Identity exponents declared, with tolerance but not capitulation. "What a splendid lesson should this Identity convey to the American nation," Edward Hine instructed his United States readers, "who very much suffer these Canaanites to take the ell for the inch given them. Manasseh, God designed them to trouble you, but never to master you. Be firm in your duty."[126] British-Israelites approached the position of Ireland in the empire from the same angle as they did the entire imperial program. The success and course of empire could be fully understood only after one discovered the racial descent and prophetic role of each portion of Britain's inheritance. British-Israelism, its adherents believed, offered the surest route to this discovery.

**Conclusion**

Imperial grandeur gave substance to the British-Israel theory. Without the inspirational force which such greatness engendered, the Identity would have quickly languished and died or at best been diluted to a state of incomprehension. This fact was not lost on British-Israelites. "The foundations on which [the Identity] rests are so rudimentary," J. G. Taylor explained, "that the least critical eye can appreciate them;--two in number, unique in kind, impregnable in their strength." The first consisted of the promises of God to his people Israel which Taylor meticulously listed. "The second foundation-stone consists of British Imperial Facts. To rehearse these facts--to review the position, constitution, and attributes of the British Empire--would be just to repeat what we have said

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[126]Hine, *Forty-seven Identifications*, 28.

concerning Israel."[127] Imperialism, being its foundation, colored every aspect of the British-Israel theory. Adherents' intellectual and emotional investment in the expansion of Britain was virtually absolute. In their lauds of the empire, however, British-Israelites only echoed the imperial rhetoric which surrounded them. This discourse spoke not only of the greatness of the empire but also of its fountainhead in the descent and abilities of the Anglo-Saxon race. The Identity existed as a similar racial-imperial movement. The Anglo-Saxon, adherents saw,

> is a man of indomitable energy and perseverance; he allows no obstacle to overcome him, no matter how formidable they may appear. He has a wonderful facility of accommodating himself to circumstances, and of making himself at home wherever he may have directed his footsteps, and as a rule the greater the obstacle presented to his advance, the greater is the charm it has for him. He appears born to overcome every difficulty which presents itself in his onward course, and to render all things subservient to his will. For these reasons he is a born colonist, for he will succeed where no one else could; no difficulties or obstacles discourage him; what he wills to do, he will accomplish or die in the attempt.

"In all this," the author concluded, "he is but a type of his progenitor the Israelite."[128] This dynamic of perceived racial prowess and its imperial consummation inspired the public rhetoric of empire and propelled and enveloped the British-Israel theory. Moreover, rarely did an imperial issue come to the fore of public or official attention that British-Israelites did nor address it more or less convincingly from an Identity standpoint. Far from ignoring or being removed from the popular racial and imperial sentiments of its time, British-Israelism depended upon them for its very existence.

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[127]Taylor, "The Two Foundations of the Identity," *Anglo-Israel Almanack for the Year 1890*, 56-59.

[128]Keighly, *'Phoster.' Light Cast on the Footprints of Israel*, 116.

## CONCLUSION: EPILOGUE

British-Israelism forced itself upon the minds of its adherents often in spite of their initial reluctance and skepticism. This is clear from the numerous conversion stories found in the literature. It was a relatively easy proposition to accept, or, perhaps more accurately, to wish to be true. The cacophony of evidence, both historical and scriptural, drowned out the objections of the theory's critics who spent much of their time arguing the esoteric points of Scripture interpretation.[1] In 1898 the popular religious writer J. B. Dimbleby, though admitting the Identity had its weak points, expressed his belief that the theory was rapidly spreading and that it had been "fairly proved" in its massive literature. The population at large still had its doubts, he went on, "though we believe that if a poll could be taken amongst the Anglo-Saxon Christians, the belief in favour of Anglo-Israelism would be carried by an overwhelming majority."[2] The allure of the British-Israel theory stemmed less from its theological or even eschatological messages than from its tribal ones. It succeeded to the extent that it did largely because the intellectual tone of imperial Britain, like that of the Hebrew prophets, was of racial identity and exclusive-

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[1]"Anglo-Israelism," *Church Quarterly Review* 14 (July 1880): 318-39; "The So-Called Arguments for Anglo-Israelism," *Church Quarterly Review* 17 (October 1883): 34-47; William Pope Harrison, "Anglo-Israel Mania," *Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church* 36 (October 1892): 204-10.

[2]Dimbleby, "The Lost Ten Tribes--Where are They?" *Past and Future* 4 (1 June 1898): 120.

ness. Whether expressed as a secular Darwinian "right" of the Anglo-Saxon to conquer the world or as a ecclesiastical declaration of a mission for the divinely-appointed race, the central concept remained unaltered. A particular people, formed in such a way as to carry out its destiny, was guided either by Divine hand or biological impulse along an inevitable and inescapable course. The model of Israel could not have been more appropriate.

An important distinction exists, however, between the tribalism of ancient Israel and that of the British-Israelites. The identity which the Israelites forged for themselves, as seen in the Old Testament, depended greatly upon the idea of the Other. Though Israel presented itself as a distinctive people set apart from its neighbors, as Paul Joyce points out, "no opportunity is missed in the narratives of Genesis to score points against Israel's rivals!"[3] The Canaanites especially served as the foil against which to raise the Israelites' consciousness of themselves and their destiny. The ancient Hebrews often ignored the very real historical and cultural connections which they shared with the Canaanites in an effort to keep the distinction between the two peoples as stark as possible. Who the Israelites were was often defined by their difference from the Canaanites. British-Israelism, however, exerted relatively little effort in the Othering process. At times, particularly in regards to Germany, Russia, and Ireland, British-Israelites attempted to define other races but this was usually done to make current diplomatic and imperial situations fit prophecy rather than to establish Britain's identity as Israel. With all the numerous peoples of

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[3]Paul Joyce, "Israelites and Canaanites, Christians and Jews: Studies in Self-Definition," *New Blackfriars* 75 (January 1994): 32.

which British-Israelites became aware through their focus on the empire, the lack of concentration on native peoples or cultures is striking. When they received any attention at all it was usually an attempt, as with the northern Indians and Japanese, to *include* rather than exclude them from the race of Israel. British-Israelism was thoroughly self-centered in the most basic meaning of the term. The British-Israelites had a great advantage over the ancient Israelites in this regard. They had the ability to look back to a specific previously defined people as a racial ancestor. They did not try to construct an identity from scratch but could simply appropriate one which they found applicable and desirable. Like fellow Anglo-Saxonists, British-Israelites used racial descent, rather than any Othering gymnastics, to define who they were and determine where their people were heading.

In all of this the Identity merely reflected the larger British imperial mindset, or, perhaps more accurately, it was the ultimate expression of this mentality. Supporters and detractors alike pointed out the similarities between British-Israel teachings and imperial discourse. The theory focused the racial and national pride which much imperial rhetoric contained towards a single object: the creation of a racial-imperial identity. Other aspects of Britain's experience in the imperial age, (i.e., sports, literature, the arts, etc.), contributed to the process of identity creation but this was usually a by-product of the original activity. Establishing Britain's identity, however, was British-Israelism's primary goal. Imperial Anglo-Saxonism, which guided much imperial thinking, also had racial definition as its main concern.[4] Like the Identity, Anglo-Saxonism depended on a clear under-

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[4]Robert A. Huttenback, *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies, 1830-1910* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 13-17.

standing of the origin and resulting characteristics of the race. Anglo-Saxonism, though, could only offer a jumbled and controversial set of ancestors with debates raging over the proportion of Celtic, Saxon, Danish, and Norman blood in the population, over their relation to the peoples on the continent, and over which imperial characteristics could be traced to which race. The desire to find the Anglo-Saxon's true racial ancestors was no less real because of its difficulties, however. The clarity and simplicity of the British-Israel theory in this regard was one of its greatest strengths. Britain's imperial experience did more for the British-Israel movement than just supply it with a large number of identifying marks of Israel, it supplied the intellectual and emotion soil in which the theory could take root and flourish.

Yet the story of British-Israelism during much of this century, like that of the empire, has been one of peak and decline. After the formation of the British-Israel World Federation in 1919 the theory reached unprecedented heights in terms of association and adherents. During the inter-war period the Identity achieved a new level of organization and could count upon the devotion of millions and the service of scores of Patrons from the highest level of society. New branches of the Federation rapidly appeared throughout Britain and the empire. The annual Congresses attracted huge numbers, on occasion well-filling the Royal Albert Hall. As with Britain's empire however, which had new territorial gains after the war and was larger than ever before, cracks had begun to appear in the British-Israel edifice. Its message gradually became confused as the predicted events, which had so accurately been placed on track during the years just before and during the war, had been derailed or considerably slowed. There had been no transfer of

power from London to Palestine. The Great War had not, as had been hoped, either ushered in a new age of British prosperity or served as the Battle of Armageddon. The Anglo-Saxon Israel Federation which they believed would secure the peace of the world was replaced by the League of Nations, a purely human venture comprised of many races.[5] Even the central point of the Identity, that of the empire, was becoming tired as the British public and government increasingly looked to loose the bonds which held the colonies to the Mother Country.[6] In the pages of the Federation's official journal, *The National Message*, leaders encouraged patience among believers even as the imperial idea had entered into full decline.[7]

With the rapid decolonization after the Second World War, British-Israelites were forced to confront a world situation at odds with the fundamentals of the Identity as constructed over the past century. The most weighty imperial losses were those of India in 1947 and of Palestine in 1948. In the course of two years British-Israel lost the "Crown Jewel" of the empire and the land promised to their fathers. As the African colonies reached independence one after another in 1950s and 1960s, and as Britain's world position declined in the face of the two superpowers, adherents had to rethink the position and

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[5]W. Pascoe Goard, "The Collapse of the League of Nations," *The National Message* 15 (6 June 1936): 361-2.

[6]For a chronological litany of the troubles facing Britain in the years after the First World War see Augusta Cook, "Epilogue Part II: The World Forces of To-day," in *Light From Patmos: The Apocalypse Simply and Concisely Explained in Forty Short Chapters for All Beginners in Prophetic Interpretation.* 2d ed. (London: Protestant British-Israel League, 1934), 251-71.

[7]A. R. Heaver, "The Sign of Empire is Sacrifice," *The National Message* 15 (11 April 1936): 228-29.

place of British-Israel. "British Israel, as we know it today," Harold E. Stough told the Federation's Jubilee Congress in 1969, "is not the B. I. teaching that John Wilson knew."

> It is not the B. I. teaching that Edward Hine proclaimed; it is not the teaching that men like Douglas Onslow knew, or Colonel Gawlor [sic], that amazing man who wrote that wonderful study of the Tribe of Dan; it is not the B. I. teaching that has filled our lecture platforms up to the pre-war years. B. I. teaching today is almost the reverse. We cannot talk glibly of the identity marks that we possess the gates of our enemies. we cannot talk proudly that one of the marks of Israel is that we are the wealthiest of nations, who lend but never borrow; we cannot really talk with great emphasis of *Great* Britain, when we are constantly told by our own politicians calling us a third-rate power, and we are retreating ignobly from this and that bastion or stronghold which God had given as part of our heritage, the heritage of the saints of the Lord.[8]

Britain's misfortunes, Stough continued, were on account of its falling away from the Lord and its failure to recognize its role in the world as Israel. Though this was a cause for mourning, all hope should not be lost. God's promises, as British-Israelites had been told for so many years, were unconditional. This period of crisis was only a temporary period of national refining before the British would again turn to the Lord and Israel would assume once again its dominant position. British-Israelites were to look less to the empire of the past which was "being frittered away" from national sin and blindness and more to the great empire of Israel in the future.[9] Such a message, however, lacked the power of its imperial predecessor and as a consequence the cause of British-Israel Truth and the membership of the Federation languished terribly in the decades after World War II.

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[8]Harold E. Stough, Secretary of the British-Israel World Federation, *A Jubilee of Witness: Address to the 50th Congress, at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton* (n.p., 1969), 10.

[9]Ibid., 11.

The history of British-Israelism and of the ideas and emotions which guide it, however, has by no means come to an end. The British-Israel World Federation continues to operate out of its London Headquarters and its branches in Canada and Australia. It still holds regular meetings to define and spread its message which is preached from the Orange Street Congregational Church directly across the street from the National Portrait Gallery. A placard outside the church proudly declares the Identity message that the "Celto-Saxon family of nations" is the continuance of ancient Israel. It can, moreover, still speak of the good which this group of nations has performed in the world by referring, as it had always done, to outside witnesses. The Secretary of the Federation gave this author a book review taken from the *Sunday Telegraph* of a new history of the British empire. The reviewer spoke of the oft-forgotten benefits which the empire bestowed on the world and declared that the independence of America, "must in retrospect be regarded as a providential event since it enabled the Thirteen Colonies to evolve into a democratic and liberal superpower which has become the pillar of civilisation in the 20th century."[10] Such conclusions fall directly in line with the teachings of British-Israel. The theory has also embraced the new media culture of the late twentieth-century by offering its teachings on audio and video tape and has, out of Canada, gone on the internet with a World Wide Web homepage.[11]

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[10]Paul Johnson, "The Empire Did More Good Than Harm," review of *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, by Lawrence James, *Sunday Telegraph* (London), 16 October 1994.

[11]*Canadian British Israel Association.* (1996) Available: http://www.computeractive.on.ca/ CBIA/

In the United States the adulterated form of the Identity has received increased notice since the April, 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building. Connections between the main suspects in the bombing and the anti-government militia movement were established almost immediately upon their arrest. Right-wing militias have become the focus of countless news reports emphasizing their formal connection or ideological appeal to "white supremacist" organizations. At the time of this writing, about twenty of these people are holed up in a compound in the state of Montana, attracting a substantial amount of media attention.[12] These racist groups are almost invariably influenced by the Christian Identity idea which believes the "White" race to be the descended from the lost tribes of Israel. While the American Identity movement has a history and doctrine all its own and cannot in its modern form be connected in any substantial way to the British-Israel World Federation, it must be admitted that its origins lay across the Atlantic and can be traced ultimately to the theories of John Wilson of Cheltenham.[13]

Whether in its original and rather benign or its mutated and dangerous form, the idea of the identity of the Anglo-Saxons or other white peoples with the Israelites continues to survive even if it exists further from the mainstream than a century ago. The reason for this, ultimately, is the emotional appeal to racial or national identity which is embodied in

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[12]Michael Janofsky, "Closer Watch of Paramilitary Groups is Urged," *New York Times*, 11 April 1996; Laurie Goodstein, "'Freemen's' Theological Agenda: Groups Embraces Racist Christian Identity," *Washington Post*, 9 April 1996; Lori Sharn and Bob Minzesheimer, "Freeman Embrace a Racist Theology," *USA Today*, 8 April 1996

[13]Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right*, chap. 1. Barkun remarks that his book is not a complete history of Anglo-Israelism which is "a subject that deserves volume of its own" (ix). It is hoped that this dissertation goes some way toward meeting that need.

the concept. Such appeal is universal. The specific identity of Israel, moreover, has not been limited to one people or race. A segment of India's population has laid claim to this identity and desires repatriation to their ancestral land.[14] For many years African-Americans have been told that the original Hebrews were black and that they are the lost tribes of Israel.[15] The Israelite Homepage declares that all the "people of color" in the world, including Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians, represent the scattering of the Tribes of Israel.[16] The intellectual dynamic here is the same as that which motivated the British-Israelite founders a century or more earlier: the desire for an identity which glorified the past, explained the current position, and promised hope for the future of a people. Though the one emerged from a position of racial dominance and the others from a less commanding post, all assert that their people have been specially chosen and would be protected from destruction.

The study of the history and nature of British-Israelism is most important, perhaps, as an aid towards recognizing and understanding the continued importance of this dynamic in the modern world. Echoes of the Identity's dynamic still resonate in other modern forms. Their desire for Israelitish descent motivated British-Israelites to ransack histori-

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[14]Yarsolav Trofimov, "Lost and Found: Rightwing Jews See Kin in India's Mizo Tribes," *Far Eastern Economic Review* 157 (8 September 1994): 36-37.

[15]Israel J. Gerber, *The Heritage Seekers: American Blacks in Search of Jewish Identity* (Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, 1971), chap. v; Larry G. Murphy, J. Gordon Melton, and Gary L. Ward, eds. *Encyclopedia of African American Religions* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), s.v. "Black Judaism," "Church of God (Black Jews)," "Crowdy, William Saunders," "Nation of Yahweh (Hebrew Israelites)," among others.

[16]*The Israelite Handbook.* (1996). Available: http:/www.users.interport.net/~barzel/

cal knowledge in an effort to piece together the story of Israel's migration into Britain. What they created, as seen in chapter four, was an impressive body of evidence connecting the British people historically to the lost tribes. For all their research, however, in the final analysis British-Israelites were left with nothing more than a *potential* connection at best. "Now, though all these [historical] arguments in detail were admitted in full force," the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* explained, "it must be evident, on a little consideration, that they cannot, even all taken together, establish the theory. For they are all based solely on conjectures, and conjectures which, however probable, fail to *prove* anything."[17] For many, however, the desire for such a racial heritage made such probable evidence sufficient to carry conviction. This is not far removed, in the minds of some, from what goes on today in much of the Afrocentric history with racial pride outweighing a dispassionate look at the evidence. Mary R. Lefkowitz, a widely respected classicist and outspoken opponent of many Afrocentrist contentions, describes the methods of Afrocentrism in terms reflective of those used in the British journal cited above. "The basic axiom of this approach," she claims, "is that if something could happen, it did happen; if something was possible, it is probable, and indeed actual."[18] This could easily be applied to British-Israel histories as well.[19] Nationalist histories are, of course, by no

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[17]"The Anglo-Israelite Theory," *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 35, no. 135 (1886): 67.

[18]Mary R. Lefkowitz, "Willful Distortions of History," *Academic Questions* 8 (Summer 1995): 29.

[19]Jasper Griffin, in reviewing a number of books debating Afrocentricity, has remarked that when a group or nation claims a particularly glorious descent, "very often it has been primarily a matter of glorifying one's own group, attaching it to some prestigious name or dominant tradition from the past: thus the Romans descended from the city

means a new creature. What British-Israel and other historical ventures represent, however, is a particularly accentuated form of these; they set out not only to interpret national history in a positive vein, but they assume or invent a particularly glorious past and then set out to prove it with little regard to the rules of evidence.[20] In the end the desire for racial or national identity overrides most other concerns. The imperial and racial ideas of nineteenth-century Britain gave the British-Israel theory its particular form. When those changed the Identity was forced to alter its teachings and it eventually suffered a dramatic decline. It is clear, then, that British-Israelism cannot be truly understood outside the context of the racial-imperial ideas which surrounded it. The desire for racial, ethnic, or national identity which inspired the movement in the first place, however, is still very much part of the human experience. Whatever modern forms this quest assumes all find a substantial and instructive precedent and correlative in the British-Israel identity of imperial Britain.

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of Troy and the goddess Venus; the British are the Lost Tribes of Israel." Jasper Griffin, "Anxieties of Influence," *New York Review of Books* 43 (20 June 1996): 67.

[20]For another example of this see Conor MacDari, *Irish Wisdom Preserved in the Bible and Pyramids* (Boston: The Four Seas Company, 1923).

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