

have been *dispersed* among all nations, is a fact written upon the face of the whole earth; but that the ten tribes, or any other number of tribes, have been lost in a body, we have no certain evidence that I am aware of, and it would seem, therefore, to be an idle fancy to *look* for them.*

Another theory is, that the American Indians had an *indigenous* origin, in accordance with the newly promulgated theory that different races of men have descended from separate and distinct creations or evolutions. It is impossible to give this doctrine, so revolting to all the instincts of our nature, and so at variance with the most obvious facts, more than a very brief notice on this occasion.

*When I say we have no evidence that the ten tribes have ever been lost, I do not mean to affirm that they still exist as a distinct people.

Nothing but their religion has preserved the identity of the Jews as a distinct people. We see this illustrated among them at the present day. A Jew cannot marry out of his own nation without abandoning his religion, and when he abandons Judaism, no serious obstacle remains in the way of his forming an alliance with one of another nation. Among the ancient Jews and ten tribes, we find a tendency to mingle with the surrounding nations just in proportion as they had apostatized from their religious faith and were placed in circumstances favorable to amalgamation. During the Babylonian captivity, the Jews had made considerable progress in this direction. Though the captivity lasted but seventy years, on their return, many of the priesthood had lost their genealogy and were excluded from the priests office; and it cost the common people a cruel struggle to rid themselves of such foreign entanglements, as had not become irretrievable. See *Ezra*, chap. 10, and *Nehemiah* 13.

Now we should remember that the ten tribes apostatized from the religion of their fathers almost from the moment of their revolt from under the house of David. They became more and more corrupt, and were wasted by wars, pestilence and famine, until the kingdom was broken up by Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, and the miserable remnant of the nation carried away captive and distributed through the kingdom of their conqueror; and this is the last we hear of the ten tribes. This was one hundred and thirty-three years before the captivity of the remnant of the kingdom of Judah, and over two hundred years before the decree of Artaxerxes for their return.

When we consider the thorough apostasy of the ten tribes before their captivity, and the circumstances in which their captivity placed them—in small companies, in different localities, or still more minutely distributed among a foreign people, with all the restraint upon intermarriages thrown off, nothing seems more natural than that they should have speedily become amalgamated with the Assyrians and all traces of them, as a distinct race, obliterated. If any of them retained their identity as Israelites at the time of the decree of Artaxerxes, two hundred years after their dispersion among the Assyrians, and had any inclination to preserve and perpetuate their nationality, they doubtless availed themselves of the privilege granted by the decree and returned to Palestine and became incorporated with the more modern Jews; for the decree was that all they of the people of Israel in his realm, who were so minded, should return. See *Ezra* 7-13.

The ten tribes are no doubt lost, but lost as drops are lost in the ocean.