

BOOK THE FIRST.

HISTORY OF THE FIRST RETURN FROM BABYLON,
LED BY ZERUBBABEL.**Cyrus Orders the Restoration of
the Temple.**

1 **I**N the first year of Kuresh King of Persia, the promise of the EVER-LIVING through the mouth of Jeremiah was fulfilled by the EVER-LIVING exciting the mind of Kuresh king of the Persians. He consequently published a proclamation to all his Empire, and also recorded it to say;—

Cyrus's Proclamation.

- 2 "Kuresh the king of the Persians commands thus: to all kingdoms of the Empire, which the EVER-LIVING GOD of the Heavens gave to me,—Who has appointed me to build a Temple for Him at Jerusalem, in Judea.—
- 3 "Whoever, of all His People is with you, may GOD be with him, so let him go up to Jerusalem, that is in Judea, and build the Temple of the EVER-LIVING GOD of Israel. He is the GOD,—Who is in Jerusalem.
- 4 And let all the residents in any place where they are lodged assist those persons in that place with silver and gold, and provisions, and cattle; and with offerings for the Temple of the GOD who is in Jerusalem."

**The Restoration begins in the Tribes
of Judah and Benjamin.**

- 5 Then the heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin arose, with the Priests and Levites, and all whose spirit GOD had excited to go up to build the Temple of the EVER-LIVING,
- 6 which is in Jerusalem, and all around encouraged them by giving articles of silver and gold, and provisions, and cattle, and jewels, beside the free will offerings. And King Kuresh brought out the vessels of the Temple of the LORD, which Nebukadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem and put into the Temple of his God,—those,
- 8 Koresh king of the Persians brought out under the care of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them to Shashbazar the Governor of Judea.
- 9 And this was their number; Thirty

basins of Gold; a Thousand basins of Silver; Twenty-nine knives; Thirty cups of gold; next Four hundred and ten cups of silver; and of other vessels one Thousand. All the vessels of Gold and Silver were Five thousand Four hundred.—The whole of them were carried by Shashbazar, with the returning transports, from Babel to Jerusalem.

Descendants of David who Returned.

And these are the sons of the Royal Family who returned from the captives of the transportation, whom Nebukadnezzar, King of Babel, transported to Babel, who returned to Jerusalem and Judea, each to his own village,—who came with Zerubabel; Joshua, Nehemiah, Saraiah, Raliah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Banah.

**From the Records of the Men of
Israel.**

Of the Beni Parosh,—Two thousand, one hundred and seventy-two;	2,172	3
Of the Beni Shaphathiah; Three hundred and seventy-two;	372	4
Of the Beni Arah; seven hundred and seventy-five;	775	5
Of the Beni Pathath—of the Beni Jeshua and Joab; Two thousand, eight hundred and twelve;	2,812	6
Of the Beni Elam; One thousand, two hundred and fifty-four;	1,254	7
Of the Beni Zathi; nine hundred and forty-five;	945	8
Of the Beni Zakkai; seven hundred and sixty;	760	9
Of the Beni Bani; Six hundred and forty-two;	642	10
Of the Beni Babai; Six hundred and twenty-three;	623	11
Of the Beni Azgad; One thousand two hundred and twenty-two;	1,222	12
Of the Beni Adonikam; Six hundred and sixty-six;	666	13

14	Of the Beni Bigvai; Two thousand and fifty-six;	2,056
15	Of the Beni Adin, Two hundred and fifty-four;	254
16	Of the Beni Atar of Hezekiah; ninety-eight;	98
17	Of the Beni Bezai; Three hundred and twenty-three;	323
18	Of the Beni Jorah; One hundred and twelve;	112
19	Of the Beni Hasham; Two hundred and twenty-three;	223
20	Of the Beni Gibar; ninety-five;	95
21	Of the Beni Bethlehem; a hundred and twenty-three;	123
22	Of the men of Netopah; Fifty-six;	56
23	Of the men of Anathoth; One hundred and twenty-eight;	128
24	Of the Beni Azmaveth; Forty-two;	42
25	Of the Beni Kiriath-arim, Kephirah, and Beroth; seven hundred and forty-three;	743
26	Of the Beni Ramah and Geba; Six hundred and twenty-seven;	627
27	Of the men of Mikas; One hundred and twenty-two;	122
28	Of the men of Bethel, and Ai, Two hundred and twenty-three;	223
29	Of the Beni Nebo; fifty-three;	53
30	Of the Beni Magbish; one hundred and fifty-six;	156
31	Of the Beni Elam; One thousand two hundred and fifty-four;	1,254
32	Of the Beni Harim; Three hundred and twenty;	320
33	Of the Beni Lod, Haded, and Ono; seven hundred and twenty-five;	725
34	Of the Beni Jeriko; Three hundred and forty-five;	345
35	Of the Beni Senah; Three thousand six hundred and thirty;	3,630
The Priests.		
36	Of the Beni Jedaiah of the House of Joshua; Nine hundred and seventy-three;	973
37	Of the Beni Immer; One thousand and fifty-two;	1,052
38	Of the Beni Pashur; One thousand two hundred and forty-seven;	1,247
39	Of the Beni Harim; One thousand and seventeen;	1,017

THE LEVITES.

Of the Beni Jeshua and Kadmiel; of the Beni Hodairah; Seventy-five;	40
	75

THE SINGERS.

Of the Beni Asaph; One hundred and twenty-eight;	41
	128

THE SONS OF THE PORTERS.

Of the Beni Shallum; the Beni Atar; the Beni Talman; the Beni Akub; the Beni Hatita; the Beni Shobal; in all one hundred and thirty-nine;	42
	139

THE ATTENDANTS.

Of the Beni Zikha; the Beni Hasupha; the Beni Paboath; the Beni Keros; the Beni Siha; the Beni Padan; the Beni Libanah; the Beni Hagabah; the Beni Akkub; the Beni Hagab; the Beni Shamlai; the Beni Hanan; the Beni Gidel; the Beni Gahar; the Beni Raiha; the Beni Rezin; the Beni Nikoda; the Beni Gazam; the Beni Aza; the Beni Paskh; the Beni Besai; the Beni Asnah; the Beni Meonim; the Beni Nephisim; the Beni Bakuk; the Beni Hakupha; the Beni Harkhur; the Beni Bazluth; the Beni Mikhida; the Beni Harsha; the Beni Barkos; the Beni Sisera; the Beni Tema; the Beni Nezikh; the Beni Hatipha.	43
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THE SONS OF SOLOMONS SERVANTS. 55

The Beni Sotia; the Beni Sopherith; the Beni Peruda; the Beni Jalah; the Beni Darkan; the Beni Gidel; the Shiphathiah; the Beni Hattil; the Beni Pokereth-Nazebaim; the Beni Ami;	56
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All the Attendants, and the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred and ninety-two. 392

The following also went up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Adan, and Immer. But they could not show their ancestral houses or their race, whether they were of Israel. 59

Of the Beni Delaiah; the Beni Tobiah; the Beni Nekoda; six hundred and fifty-two; 60

And of the children of the Priests; the Beni Habiah; the Beni Barzellai who took as a wife one of the daughters of Barzellai the Glladite, and so was called by his name;— These sought their Register with 62

- those enumerated by their genealogy, but were unable to find it. They were therefore degraded from the
- 63 Priesthood, and the Governor commanded them not to eat of the most holy offerings until a Priest arose with Urim and Thumim.
- 64 The whole caravan inclusive was, Forty thousand, 40,360 three hundred and sixty, beside their men and women servants, who were Seven
- 65 thousand three hundred and thirty-seven, with two hundred singing men and women. 7,337 200
- 66 Seven hundred and sixty horsemen; Two hundred and
- 67 forty-five mules; four hundred and thirty-five camels; 760 Six thousand and seven hundred and twenty asses. 48,657
- 68 And some of the heads of Ancestries on their arrival at the House of the EVER-LIVING in Jerusalem, offered gifts to the Temple of GOD to erect
- 69 it upon its foundations. They gave according to their power, to the treasury of the Works, Sixty thousand
- 70 Darics of Gold; and five thousand pounds weight of silver; and a hundred priests' robes.¹

A New Altar Built.

Thus the Priests and the Levites, and some of the People, and the Singers, and the Gate-keepers, and the Attendants, returned, with many

3 of Israel to their villages, and on the arrival of the seventh month, after the Children of Israel had reached their towns, the People assembled

2 like one man at Jerusalem. Then Jeshua-ben-Josadak arose with his brother Priests, and Zerubabel-ben-Shalthial, and his brothers, and built an Altar to the GOD of Israel, to offer Burnt-offerings upon, in accord-

¹ NOTE.—Ch. 2, v. 69. Taking the value of the Bullion at weight alone, the Gold equals £300,000 sterling English, and the Silver, £20,000. But at the period of Ezra the purchasing power would be many times more. This shows the commercial position attained by the Jews, for a part alone of them returned, and few, if any, of the Ten Tribes, as the record shows. The position these Captives had also attained under the Babylonian Despotism, or Medo-Persian Commonwealth, is a witness to the high intellectual capacity and civilization of the Hebrew race, compared to all the nations around them, even under the disadvantages of being a conquered and enslaved people, and to our day they retain the same mental vigour.—F. F.

ance with the record in the Law of Moses, the MAN of GOD. And they

3 built the Altar on its own foundation, although fear was upon them from the people of the Countries, and offered Burnt-Offerings on it to the EVER-LIVING at the morning

4 and evening. They also made the Feast of Tabernacles, according to the Records, and Offerings day by day in number as the Decree commands, day by day.

After that for the perpetual Offerings, and the New Moons, and all the Holy Festivals of the EVER-LIVING, and for every one who offered of free will to the EVER-LIVING. They began from the first

6 day of the seventh month to offer Burnt-Offerings to the EVER-LIVING although the foundation of the Temple of the EVER-LIVING was not yet laid. They also gave money

7 to the stone-cutters and carpenters, and food and drink to the Zidonians and the Tzurites to bring cedar wood from Lebanon by sea to Joppa, in accordance with the Grant of Koresh King of the Persians to them.

Rebuilding the Temple.

And in the second year of their

8 arrival at the HOUSE of GOD in Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubabel-ben-Shalthial, and Jeshua-ben-Josadak, and the rest of their friends, the Priests and Levites, and all who had come from the Captivity to Jerusalem, and they appointed the Levites from twenty years of age and upwards, to superintend the works at the House of the EVER-LIVING.

9 He then appointed Joshua his son, and his friend Kadmiel, and his son, sons of Hodaviah, to superintend together the execution of the works at the House of the EVER-LIVING GOD, with the sons of Henadad, and their sons and relatives, the Levites. When they laid

10 the foundations of the buildings of the Temple of the EVER-LIVING, the Priests stood robed and with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the EVER-LIVING, according to the arrangement of David king of Israel and responded:—

II

“ Praise and thank the LIFE,
For He is good ;—
For His Mercy endures for ever
To Israel ! ”

Then all the People cheered with a great cheer to praise the EVER-LIVING at the laying of the foundation of the House of the LORD. But many of the old Priests and Levites and heads of Houses, who had seen the former House, and the foundation of this House before their eyes, wept with a loud voice, but many cheered for joy at the top of their voice; so none of the people could distinguish the sound of the cheering from the sound of the weeping of the people,—for the people cheered with a great cheering,—and the sound was heard afar.

Their Enemies Assail the Jews.

4 When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the sons of the Transports were building a Temple to the EVER-LIVING GOD of Israel, they approached Zerubabel, and the Heads of Houses, and said to them;—"We will build with you; for we follow your GOD like yourselves; but we have not sacrificed from the days of Ezerhadon, king of Ashur, who brought us up here."
3 But Zerubabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the Heads of the Houses of Israel replied;—"You shall not!—But we will build the House of our GOD; for we alone can build for the EVER-LIVING GOD of Israel, as king Koresh, king of the Persians, commanded us."

(529 B.C.)

4 The People of the countries therefore impeded the plans of the People of Judah, and interfered with them in building, and hired persons against them, and conspired to break their intention, all the time of Kuresh king of the Persians and up to the period of Dariush the king of the Persians.

(446 B.C.)

6 [[Afterwards, in the reign of Akhashorush, they wrote to accuse the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem.
7 And again in the times of Arthakshasta, in a time of peace, Mithradath, Tabal, and the rest of their companions wrote to Arthakshasta King of Persia, and the wording of their letter was in Aramith,—and I copy it from the Aramith;—
8 Rehum, Master of the Rolls, and Shemshai the Secretary wrote a letter

in conjunction against Jerusalem to the king Arthakshasta in this form;—

The Samaritan Petition against the Jews.

"Rehum the Master of the Rolls 9 and Shemshai the Secretary, and their associates, of the Dinia, and Afrasthakia, Tarflia, Afrasia, Arkair, Babalia, Shushankia, Dahira, Almia, and the rest of the Peoples whom the 10 Great and beloved Asnaper brought over to his City of Shameron, with others over the River."

(This is copied from the letter 11 they sent to King Arthakshasta.)—"Your servants of the men over the 12 river, and others, inform the king himself of the Jews who ascended from you to us at Jerusalem, who are building the rebellious and bad City, and have finished the walls, and they are joining them. However, it should 13 be made known to the king, that if this City is rebuilt, and its walls are completed, they will not pay tribute, tax, or toll, and then the king will suffer. Consequently because we eat 14 of the salt of the Palace we have advised the king; for it is not right for us to look at such dishonour, and we have sent to inform the king, so that 15 the books of records of your fathers may be searched, when you will find in the book of records that this City, is a rebellious town, and dangerous to kings and governors, and exerted itself to excite disturbance in former times;—and for that reason this City was burnt down. We wish therefore 16 to advise the king, that if this City should be rebuilt, and its walls completed, you will have no province over the river in consequence."

The King's Reply.

The King replied by a letter:— 1
"To Rehum, the Master of the Rolls, and Shemshai, the Secretary, and the rest of their Associates, who reside in Shameron and the district beyond the river, health and the rest;—
"The letter you sent to us has been 18 openly read before us, so I signed an 19 order, and they searched, and have found that this City from former times, has risen against the kings, and rebelled, and excited sedition in itself. And that powerful kings have existed 20 in Jerusalem, and governed all beyond

the river, and tribute, tax, and toll,
 21 were paid to them. Consequently,
 you must make a decree to restrain
 these men, and that this City must
 not be rebuilt, until I shall sign a
 22 Decree; and learn not to be slow to
 execute this. Why should the Royal
 affairs be endangered?"

The Building of the Temple Stopped.

23 When the copy of the letter of
 king Arthakshasta was read before
 Rehum, and Shemshai the Secretary
 and their Associates, they at once
 proceeded to Jerusalem, against the
 Jews and prevented them by force of
 24 an army. Thus the work at the House
 of GOD in Jerusalem was stopped
 until the third year of the reign of
 Dariush king of the Persians.]¹]

(529 B.C.) The Temple again Begun.

5 Then the Preachers Hagai and
 Zakeriah-ben-Adna preached to the
 Jews who were in Jerusalem with the
 power of the GOD of Israel upon them.
 2 Consequently Zerubabel-bar-Shal-
 thial, and Jeshua-bar-Jozadak began
 again to rebuild the House of GOD at
 Jerusalem, and the Preachers of GOD
 helped them.

The Governor of Samaria Interferes.

3 Then Tatnai the Governor of the
 Over-river, and Shatharboznai, and
 their Associates sent and enquired of
 them, "Who gave a permission to
 rebuild this Temple and to close up
 4 this wall?" They also continued to
 ask them, "What are the names
 of the men who are erecting this
 building?"

5 However the eye of GOD was upon
 the leaders of the Jews, and they did
 not prevent them until a despatch
 could be sent to Dariush, and a reply
 received about it.

¹ NOTE.—Ch. 4, v. 24. The passage which I place in brackets from v. 6 to v. 24 of Ch. 4 of "Ezra," was evidently written long after the period of Zerubbabel, who led the First Return under the Decree of Cyrus, in 536 B.C., and is a note of explanation of the course of events between him and Ezra the Priest, whom I call the "Second Ezra," and "Nehemiah the Second," who lived nearly a century after Zerubbabel. The failure of previous translators to perceive this has involved the history in a wild confusion, of which Anti-Christians have taken full advantage.—F. F.

Copy of Tatnai's Letter.

A Copy of the letter, that Tatnai 6
 the Over-river Governor, and Shethar-
 boznai, and their associates, the
 Afaraskia, who were over the river,
 sent to the king Dariush. (They 7
 sent a letter to him written in this
 form.)

"To Dariush the King; Perfect 8
 health!—

"It should be known to the king
 that on our going to the Province of
 the Jews, to the Temple of the GREAT
 GOD, we found it rebuilt with great
 stones, with timber fixed in the walls,
 and the work is being pushed forward,
 and the works prosper in their hands.
 We consequently asked the Leaders, 9
 'WHO gave you a Decree for this
 Temple?—to build it, and close in
 the walls?' We also demanded the 10
 names of their leaders so as to inform
 you of the names of those men. When 11
 they returned us this answer;—'We
 are the servants of the GOD of Heaven
 and Earth! and we are rebuilding
 the Temple that was formerly here
 many years ago, which a great king
 of Israel built and furnished. But 12
 because our ancestors provoked the
 GOD of HEAVEN, he gave them to
 the hand of Nebukadnezzar, king of
 Babel, the Kasdia, and he overthrew
 that Temple, and transported the
 People to Babel. But in the first year 13
 of Koresh king of Babel, King Koresh
 signed a Decree for this Temple to
 be rebuilt. And also the gold and 14
 silver furniture of the Temple of GOD,
 which Nebukadnezzar transferred
 from the Temple of Jerusalem, and
 carried to the Temple of Babel, King
 Koresh transferred from the Temple
 of Babel, and delivered to Shashbazar
 who was appointed Governor there,
 and said to him, 'Take this furniture, 15
 and carry it to the Temple of Jeru-
 salem, and rebuild the House of GOD
 on its own foundations. Shashbazar 16
 consequently came,—and laid the
 foundations of the House of GOD at
 Jerusalem,—and from that time until
 now it has been building and is not
 completed.'

"Consequently, therefore, if it 17
 pleases the king, let there be a search
 at the Royal Treasury at Babel, to
 ascertain if King Koresh did sign a
 Decree for the rebuilding of this
 House of GOD in Jerusalem? And
 let the king send us information about
 this affair."

Darius Orders a Search for Cyrus's Decree.

- 6 King Dariush consequently signed an order, and they searched in the Record Office of the Treasury where the archives were kept in Babel, and found at Akhmetha the Capital of the Government of Media, a roll,¹ on which was written round the records:—

Copy of the Decree of Cyrus.

- 3 "In the first year of Koresh the King:

"King Koresh signs a Decree concerning the House of GOD at Jerusalem:—

"Let a House be built for the Sacrificing of Sacrifices. And let the foundations be constructed in length sixty cubits, and sixty cubits broad.

- 4 "Let it be built of three courses of great stones, and a course of timber: and let the cost be paid from the Royal Palace.

- 5 "And also let the gold and silver furniture of the House of GOD, that Nebukadnezzar removed from the Temple of Jerusalem, and carried to Babel, be restored, and taken to the Temple in Jerusalem, and put in its proper place in the House of GOD:'

Confirmation by Darius.

- 6 "Consequently, Tatnai, Governor of the Over-river, Shathar-boznai, and

¹ NOTE.—Ch. 6, v. 2. "A roll"—or probably it should be translated "Cylinder,"—a staff of clay, which at that period was the usual substance upon which Government records and other writing was written, or rather engraved, and the clay then baked into pottery in a kiln, so as to be indestructible, as the Assyrian and Babylonian discoveries of Layard and others have shown by exploration of the buried ruins of those ancient Cities. These discoveries throw great light upon the contemporary Biblical histories, and prove that at the time under review here, the Fourth century before Christ, papyrus or other paper had not been invented. The

גללי (Galali) Rolls spoken of in the Scriptures of earlier date than 400 B.C. were undoubtedly of the above kind, and the ספרים (Seferim), Books, were slabs, slates, or thin board tablets, as the word means "a split-off." I note this, for the fact disposes of certain attacks upon the Biblical records, and of the alleged authenticity of (asserted) stupendously ancient "Papyri," containing statements contradictory to the Scriptural histories. Those "Papyri" are in reality modern forgeries to meet the desires of European sceptics who seek to assail the Christian Faith.—F. F.

your associates, the Afaraskia, of the Over-river, must refrain from interference. Let the works at the House of GOD be done. Let the Governor of the Jews, and the leaders of the Jews construct the House of GOD upon its site.

"And I further sign this Decree as to what you shall provide for these Leaders of the Jews who are building this House of GOD;—That there shall be paid from the Royal Treasuries,—from the taxes of the Over-river,—the expenses that may be incurred by those men, and without delay. And whatever is needed, whether of young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, to offer to the GOD OF THE HEAVENS,—wheat, salt, wine, oil, as demanded by the Priests in Jerusalem, you shall give to them, day by day;—of which fail not!—for them to present perfumes to the GOD OF THE HEAVENS, and to pray for the life of the King and his children.

"And I sign a Decree, that every person who may alter this letter a beam shall be taken from his house, and he shall be nailed upright upon it, and his house be made a dunghill for it. And may the GOD who dwells there, confound and overthrow every king and People who extends his hand to alter or injure the House of GOD that is in Jerusalem!

"I, Dariush, have confirmed this Decree. Let it be executed at once."

Therefore Tatnai, the Governor of the Over-river, Shethar-boznai, and their Associates, because of what King Dariush had sent them in the above, acted at once; and the Leaders of the Jews built, and prospered, through the Preaching of the Preachers Hagai, and Zakeriah-bar-Adoa. So they built and completed, according to the order of the GOD of Israel, and the Decrees of Koresh and Dariush and Arthakshasta the kings of the Persians.

(B.C. 515.) The Temple Finished and Dedicated.

So the temple was finished on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Dariush, when the Children of Israel, with the Priests and Levites, and the rest of the sons of the Transports, celebrated the Dedication of the House of GOD with delight. At this Dedication they offered in the House of GOD a hundred

bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve He-goats, for the number of the Tribes of Israel.

18 They also appointed the Divisions of the Priests, and the courses of the Levites for the service of GOD at Jerusalem, as written in the book of Moses.

The Passover Festival Restored.

19 Then the Sons of the Transports made the Passover on the fourteenth of the first month; for the Priests and Levites had purified themselves together,—all of them were purified,

—so they slew the Passover for all the sons of the Transports,—both for their brothers the Priests, and for themselves, and all the Children of 21 Israel ate it.—Those who had returned from the Transportation, and all who were purified from the defilement of the Heathen land, who had come to seek the EVER-LIVING GOD of Israel. So they made the Feast of 22 Unfermented bread for seven days, with joy, for the LORD had gladdened them, and softened the heart of the king of Ashur towards them to strengthen their hands in the works at the House of the GOD of Israel.

END OF THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST RESTORATION.

EZRA.

BOOK THE SECOND.

(457 B.C.) *The Autobiography of the Second Ezra.*¹

7 And after these affairs, in the reign of Arthakshasta, king of Persia, Ezra-ben-Seriah-ben-Azeriah-ben-2 Hilkiah, - ben - Shalom, - ben - Zadok, 3 - ben - Ahitub - ben - Ameriah - ben - 4 Azeriah, - ben - Morioth, - ben - Zerakia, 5 - ben - Uzi, - ben - Buki, - ben - Abishua, - ben - Phinehas, - ben - Eleazer, - ben - 6 Aaron,—the High Priest,—he, Ezra went up from Babel. He was well accomplished in the Laws of Moses, that the LORD the GOD of Israel gave. The king also endowed him, on account of the power of the EVER-LIVING GOD upon him, with all that 7 he requested from him. There also went up some of the Children of Israel, and some Priests and Levites, and Singers, and Attendants, to Jerusalem, in the seventh year of king 8 Arthakshasta, who arrived at Jerusalem in the fifth month of the 9 seventh year of the king. For on the first of the first month the ascent from Babel was commanded and in

the first of the fifth month he arrived at Jerusalem, by the good help of his GOD to him; for Ezra had set his 10 heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to practice and teach its Institutions and Decrees of Israel.

Arthakshasta's Letter of Appointment of Ezra.

Now this is a copy of the Letter 11 which King Arthakshasta gave to Ezra the Priest, the accomplished in the commands of the EVER-LIVING, and His Institutions, to Israel.

"ARTHAKSHASTA, the King of 12 Kings, to Ezra the Priest, the Accomplished in the writings of the Beneficent and Perfect GOD OF THE HEAVENS;—

"I have signed a Decree that all 13 the People of Israel in my Empire with their Priests and Levites who wish to go with you to Jerusalem, may go. Because you are sent from 14 the Presence of the King, and his seven Counsellors, to enquire about Judea and Jerusalem, with the Law of your GOD in your hand. And to 15 carry the silver and gold given by the King and his Counsellors to the GOD of Israel, who dwells in Jerusalem. Also, all the silver and gold that you 16 have collected in all the Provinces of Babel, with the free-will offerings of your People, and the Priests who present freely to the House of their GOD in Jerusalem.

1 NOTE.—Ch. 7, v. 1. I think there were two statesmen named Ezra, the history of whose administrations is given in this Book, or these two Books, for the period of time between the Ezra of Cyrus's restoration and that under Arthakshasta, 79 years, is too long to have been the active life of one man. I therefore separate the two narratives. This second Ezra was, as stated, a priest, the first Ezra, or Zerubabel, being clearly a civil statesman.—F. F.

- 17 "On this account you shall purchase diligently with that money, oxen, rams, lambs, and their food and drink offerings, and offer them upon the Altar of your GOD at Jerusalem. And you may do with the remainder of the silver and gold what seems best in the opinion of yourself and your friends for your GOD. And also the furniture that is given to you to place in the House, offer them as a present to GOD, in Jerusalem. But whatever besides may be needful for the House of your GOD, that it occurs to you to present, provide for it from the Royal Treasury.
- 21 "And I, myself, Arthakshasta, the King, sign this Decree to all the Treasurers of the Over-river, that whatever Ezra the Priest, the Accomplished in the Law of the GOD OF THE HEAVENS, demands of you, you shall immediately execute it, to the amount of one hundred talents of silver, and to a hundred Kors of wheat, and to a hundred baths of wine, and a hundred baths of oil, and of salt without noting.
- 23 "All that is commanded by the GOD OF THE HEAVENS, let it be done quickly for the House of the GOD OF THE HEAVENS;—for why should there be anger against the Dominions of the King and his children?
- 24 "And we notify you, that regarding all the Priests, Levites, Singers, Door-keepers, Attendants, or Servants of this House of GOD; it is not allowed to impose upon them tribute, tax, or toll.
- 25 "And you, Ezra, according to the Science of your GOD that you possess, appoint Judges, and Magistrates, who can administer Justice to all the People of the Over-river. All should understand the Law of your GOD; and if they do not know it, teach them. But whoever will not practise the Laws of your GOD, and the laws of the king, let swift justice be done on him at once; whatever results, whether death, or uprooting, or fining, or imprisonment."
- 27 I thanked the LORD GOD of our fathers who put such things into the heart of the King, to adorn the House
- 23 of the LORD at Jerusalem; and who has extended mercy to me before the King and his counsellors, and all the Great Generals of the king! Thus I was bold, because the hand of the

LORD GOD was with me, and I collected some of the heads of my People to ascend with me.

List of Jews Accompanying the Second Ezra to Jerusalem.

And these are the heads of families 8 and the genealogies of those who went up with me from Babel, in the reign of Arthakshasta the king.

From the Beni Phinehas, Gershom; 2 of the Beni Ithamar, Daniel; of the Beni David, Hatush; of the Beni 3 Shekaniah with the Beni Tarash, Zakeriah, and with them of the lineage of their ancestors,—a hundred and fifty. 150

Of the Beni Phakath-moab, 4 Aliwaini - ben - Zarkhiah, and with him two hundred men. 200

Of the Beni Shekaniah-ben- 5 Jakhzial, and with him three hundred men. 300

And from the Beni Adinabed- 6 ben-Jonathan, and with him five hundred of the gentry. 500

And from the Beni Ailam, 7 Jeshiah - ben - Athaliah, and with him seventy men. 70

And from the Beni Sheftiah, 8 Zebadiah-ben-Mikal, and with him eighty men. 80

From the Beni Joab Aba- 9 diah-ben-Jahkial, and with him two hundred and eighteen men. 218

And from the Beni Shelomith-ben-Josephiah, and with him a hundred and sixty men. 160

And from the Beni Babi, 11 Zakeriah-ben-Babi, and with him twenty-eight men. 28

And from the Beni Azgad, 12 Jokhanan-ben-Habatnan, and with him one hundred and ten men. 110

And from the Beni Adonikam, the Dawdler, the names are Aliflat, Javal, and Shemiah, and with them sixty men. 60

And from the Beni Bigvi, 14 Authi, and Zabud, and with them seventy men. 70

Total 1,946

Ezra Collects his Camp.

I collected them at the River that 15 goes by Ahava; and encamped there three days, where I reviewed the People and the Priests, and discovered there were none from the Beni Levi

16 there. I consequently sent to Aliezar and Arial and Shemiah, and Ainathan, and Jarib, and to Alnathan, and to Nathan, and Zakeriah, and to Meshulam, their Chiefs, and to Joirib,
 17 and to Alnathan, the Teachers, and despatched them to Ado the Chief in the district of Kasiphia, and put a message in their mouths to transmit to Ado, and the Attendants their relatives in the District of Kasiphia, to send to us Guardians of the House of
 18 our GOD. And they sent to us, by the good hand of our GOD being with us, intelligent men from the Beni Makhli - ben - Levi - ben - Israel; and Sharbiah and eighteen of his sons
 19 and brothers; with Hashabiah, and Jeshaiiah, from the Beni Merari, with twenty of his brothers and sons.
 20 And from the Attendants who were appointed by David, and his Officers to serve the Levites, as Attendants two hundred and twenty, all of them properly catalogued.

A Fast to Pray for a Safe Journey.

21 I then proclaimed a Fast at the River by Ahava to humble ourselves before our GOD, to seek from him a safe journey, for ourselves, our children, and all our baggage, for I was
 22 ashamed to ask the king for an army and cavalry to guard us from enemies on the road, because we had said to the king the power of our GOD was with all who seek Him to benefit them, but His power and anger upon all who
 23 forsake Him. We consequently fasted and entreated from our GOD about this and He was ready with us.

The Subscriptions to the Temple.

24 I next selected twelve from the Chief Priests—that is Sherbiah and Hashabiah, and ten of their companions with them, and weighed the silver and gold to them, as well as the vessels presented to the House of GOD, the presents of the King and his Counsellors, and his Generals,
 25 and the subscriptions of all Israel. I there weighed into their custody six hundred talents of silver, and a hundred and fifty talents of silver vessels and a hundred talents of gold.¹

¹ NOTE.—Ch. 8, v. 26. The Bullion, by mere weight, was, of Silver, £182,250, and of Gold, £547,500 sterling, but in purchasing value probably ten or fifteen times the present power in our day (1903). If we

Beside twenty bowls of gold of a
 thousand Darics, and two vessels of
 best bronze gold, as valuable as gold.
 I then said to them, "You are con-
 28 secrated to the LORD, and the sacred
 vessels, and the silver and gold are
 presented to the EVER-LIVING GOD
 of your fathers, so guard and preserve
 29 them, until you weigh them to the
 chief Priests and Levites, and the
 Chiefs of the Families of Israel at
 Jerusalem, who will bring them to
 the House of our GOD."

The Priests and Levites then ac-
 30 cepted the silver and gold, and the
 vessels, to carry to Jerusalem to the
 House of our GOD.

The March Begun from the Ahava.

We afterwards marched from the
 31 River by Ahava, on the twelfth of the
 first month, and the hand of GOD was
 with us, and protected us from the
 hand of any enemy, or robber on the
 journey. Thus we arrived at Jeru-
 32 salem and rested for three days, and
 33 on the fourth day the silver, gold and
 vessels for the House of our GOD were
 weighed by the hand of Meremoth-
 ben-Adriah the Priest, and with him
 were Aliezar-ben-Phinehas, and with
 them Jozabad-ben-Ishua, and Noadiah-
 ben-Bigvi, the Levite, the whole were
 34 by number and weight, and the whole
 weight was recorded at the time.

The Returned Transports Offer Gifts.

The sons of the Transportation, 35
 who had come from captivity, then
 offered burnt-offerings to the GOD of
 Israel;—Twelve bulls, for all Israel;
 Ninety-six rams; Seventy-seven
 lambs; and Twelve he-goats as a sin-
 offering,—The whole were a burnt-
 offering to the LORD.

They afterwards delivered the 36
 Decrees of the king to the Royal
 Governors and Administrators of the
 Over-river, and they assisted the
 People and the House of GOD.

The Second Ezra, the Priest, Separates the Jews from Pagans.

When all this was done, the Chiefs 9
 approached me and said; "The

take ten times as the equivalent, it represents £7,188,150 sterling. If fifteen times, it reaches £10,592,300 sterling, and even that is probably below the then commercial power of this magnificent subscription.—F. F.

People of Israel have not separated themselves, or the Priests and Levites, from the populations of the countries, with their abominations,—that is of the Cananites, the Khithites, the Perizites, the Jebusites, the Amonites, the Moabites, the Mitzeraim, and the Amorites,—for they have taken some of their daughters for themselves, and their sons have corrupted their Sacred Race, with the Peoples of the countries, and the hand of the nobles and gentry has been the first in this sin."

3 When I heard this report I tore off my robes, and cloak, and pulled the hair off my head, and beard, and sat
4 down in consternation, and all who were terrified at the words of the GOD of Israel collected to me about this great wrong, and I sat in consternation until the evening sacrifice.
5 But when the evening sacrifice was offered I rose from my depression with my robe and cloak torn, and knelt on my knees, and spread my hands to my
6 EVER-LIVING GOD, and exclaimed;—
"My GOD! I blush and am ashamed to raise my face before You! for our passions increase on our head, and our sins are piled up to the skies!
7 From the times of our fathers we have been in great sin to this day! and for our faults, we, our kings, and Priests have been given to the hands of the kings of the Peoples; to ruin, to shame, and to degradation, and a
8 blushing face, as we now are. But now when a little momentary kindness has come from our EVER-LIVING GOD for a portion of us to escape, and to give us a nail in this Sacred Place,—that our GOD may enlighten our eyes, and grant us a little revival
9 in our bondage,—for we are slaves,—but our GOD has not forsaken us in our slavery,—but has extended mercy to us before the king of the Persians,—to grant us a revival, and to raise the House of our GOD, and to repair its ashes, and has given us a fence for
10 Judah in Jerusalem;—then now, what can be said to our GOD after this,—when we abandon Your commands, which You commanded by
11 the means of your servants, the Preachers, saying;—

"The land which you are going to possess, is a defiled country from the defilements of the People of the country, and from their depravities with which they have filled it from

place to place, in corrupting themselves. Consequently give not your
12 sons to their daughters, nor your daughters to their sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity for ever! So that you may be strong and eat the produce of the country, and transmit it to your children for ever!"—And after all that has come
13 upon us for our bad practices, and for our great offences,—although You our GOD, have punished us less than our sins,—and given us an escape like this,—we again break Your
14 commands, and marry with these depraved people!—Be not angry with us to the extreme!—lest no portion should escape!—EVER-LIVING GOD
15 of Israel! You are righteous, for we a remnant, have escaped, as to-day;—Look! we are before You in our guilt! for none can stand up before You about this!"

The People Promise to Reform.

And when Ezra was praying, and
10 confessed himself in tears, and had flung himself down before the House of GOD, a very great crowd of men, women, and children from all Israel collected to him;—and they wept with much weeping. And Shekariah-
2 ben-Jekhial, one of the sons of Aulam, addressed, and said to Ezra;—

"We have done wrong to our GOD, when we turned to marry women from the Peoples of the country; yet there is hope for Israel over this. So
3 now let us make an agreement with our GOD to expel all the women and the children born of them, according to the advice of my Lord, and of those who tremble at the commands of our GOD! But let it be done according to law. Arise for the affair
4 is yours,—and we will support you in its execution."

Ezra consequently arose and swore
5 the Chief Priests, and Levites, and all Israel to do according to this proposal;—And they swore it.

(B.C. 456.) A Public Meeting Called to Decide How.

Then Ezra arose from before the
6 House of GOD, and went to the residence of Jhokhanan - ben - Alishib where he lodged. He ate neither bread nor drank water, for he was grieved at the great wrong. But they
7 made a proclamation in Judah and Jerusalem, to all the sons of the

8 Transportation, to assemble at Jerusalem; and that every one who did not come at the third day, as advised by the Chiefs, and Judges, all his property should be forfeited, and himself excluded from the Great Assembly.

9 The whole of the Officers of Judah and Benjamin therefore collected at Jerusalem on the third day, which was the twentieth of the ninth month, and all the people who sat in the Square of the House of GOD, were trembling about the business, and for the rains.

The Public Debate.

10 Then Ezra the Priest arose, and said to them;—

“You are guilty, and have married foreign women, to add to the faults of Israel.—But now confess it to the EVER-LIVING GOD of your fathers, and do what will please Him, and separate yourselves from the Peoples of the country, and from the wives you have married!”

12 All the assembly thereupon answered, and said with a loud voice, “Let it be done as you have said to us. The people are very wet and it is the Rainy Season,—and we are not able to stand outside,—and the business cannot be settled in a day or two,—for we are many who have erred in this thing. Let our Chiefs, now, be appointed by all the public, and let anyone in our towns who have married strange women go to them, at appointed times, and the Magistrates of every village, and the Judges, until the hot anger of our GOD about this matter is turned from us.”

15 However Jonathan-ben-Ashal and Jhaziah-ben-Thikna stood up against this,—and Meshulam, and Shabthi the Levite, supported them.

16 The sons of the Transportation effected it nevertheless, and they selected, with Ezra the Priest, Princes heads of Families of their ancestors, and appointed all of them, to sit on the first day of the tenth month to examine into the business, and they finished about all the men who had married foreign women by the first day of the first month.

18 They also found some among the sons of the Priests who had married foreign women, Jeshua-ben-Josadak and his brother Masiah, and Aliazer,

and Jarib, and Gedaliah, but they undertook to divorce their wives, and offer a sin-offering of the flock for their sin.

And from the Beni Amer Hanani, and Zebadiah and from the Beni Kharim, Masiah, and Aliah, and Shemiah, Ikhizal, and Uziah; and from the Beni Phashkur, Alzoaini, Masaiah, Ishmael, Nathanal, Jozabad, and Alashah.

And from the Levites; Jozabad, Shimei, and Keliiah, surnamed the Dwarf, Pethaiah, Judah and Aliazor.

And from the Singers; Aliashib.

And from the Doorkeepers Shalum, and Telem, and Uri.

And from Israel;

From the Beni of Parosh; Raniah and IZIAH, and Malkiah, and Beniah; and from the Beni Elam; Mataniah, Zekariah, Aliah; and of the Beni Zatu, Aliani, Aliashib, Mataniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aiziza. And of the Beni Babi,

Jhohanah, Hananiah, Zabi, Athli; and from the Beni Meshulam, Malak,

and Abdiah, Jashub, and Shal, and Ramoth. From the Beni Pathath

Moab; Adna, and Kalab, Benaiah, Masiah, Mataniah, Bozalal, and

Binni, and Manaseh. And of the Beni Harum; Aliazer, Ishiah, Malkiah,

Shemaiah, Shimeon, Benjamin, Maluk, Shemoriah; Of the Beni

Hashum; Matni, Matatah, Zabad, Alifelet, Jerimi, Manaseh, Shimi; Of

the Beni Bani; Madi, Amram, and Auwel Benaiah, Bedaiah, Keluhi;

Veniah, Meremoth, Aliashib, Mata- riah, Matani, and Jasu; and Bani,

and Binni, Shinai, and Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adiah, Maknadabi,

Shashi, Shari, Azarel, and Shelemiah, Shemeriah, Shalum, Amariah, Joseph;

Of the Beni Nebo Jebel, Matithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Ido, and Joel, Beniah.

All these had married foreign women, and some of these wives had borne children. . . .¹

¹ NOTE.—Ch. 10, v. 44. The End of Ezra, as we have it in the Hebrew texts, is apparently only a fragment of his autobiography, for it evidently stops in the middle of a sentence, either by the death of that statesman, or from accident to his manuscript; hence, I would suggest that the books in the Apocrypha, which have come down to us only by a Greek translation, are really parts of his history, and should follow on here.—F. F.