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THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS.

A SERMON

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"Now in the first year of Cyrus King of Persia that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus King of Persia, The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah."—Ezra i. 1-2.

THE book of Ezra is a plain and straightforward narrative of one of the most important parts of the history of the chosen people. It tells of the return of the Jews from their long captivity. Part of the people returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel about the year 536 B. C. Another portion of the captives found their way back to their native land under the leadership of Ezra eighty years later. The book of Ezra is in brief a history of the two returns and the events immediately following. In the first chapter we have an account of the inauguration of the proceedings which issued in the return of many of the captives. "Now in the first year of Cyrus King of Persia, that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom." Let us fasten on the word or rather the theme—"Proclamation."