

The Berean Christadelphian

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the exposition and defence of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, with the object of helping to make ready a People prepared for the coming of the Lord. Opposed to the unscriptural teachings of the papal and protestant churches of the world.

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“They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many believed.”—Acts 17: 11.

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CHRIST IS COMING AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

"I Will Meet With You There"

When the counsel communicated to David and other servants of God is reduced to writing, does it not then become the property of all who possess the writing? And if we obey it, are we not guided by it? And are we not, in that case, guided by God, Who gave the counsel?

Unquestionably. We shall realize the force of this if we think what our position would have been in the absence of the Scriptures. We should have been totally in the dark, cut off from all knowledge of God, and, therefore, from all prayer and hope and righteousness. Not knowing His will, we could not have done it. We should have been sunk in deep night,

"Alienated from the life of God through ignorance in us, because of the blindness of our hearts" (Eph. 4:18).

With the Scriptures in our hands, it is entirely different. We may, if we suffer ourselves, be "guided by His counsel" and "afterwards received to glory," and this guidance and reception will be all of God.

But some will think, "Surely there is more guidance than this. Surely God does not leave us to the Bible **merely**. Surely God is not indifferent to those who strive to know His will, and to **realize its power in themselves**, and do it. Surely He helps them!"

The thought is not unscriptural. On the contrary, it is the teaching of the Word that if we draw nigh to God, **He will draw nigh to us**; that if we choose the things wherein He delights—and those things are all embodied in the Bible—He will have his eye upon us and regard our way; that if we commit our way to Him, **He will direct our steps**; that if we are broken and contrite in heart and tremble at His word, He will look to us and help our infirmities, and succour us in temptation, and supply our needs, and chasten us in our errors, and forgive our sins, and **strengthen us in the way of righteousness**, and make all things work together for our good.

But all this is dependent on our waiting on the Word in daily reading and meditation. He hath magnified His word about all His Name. He has appointed it as the means of our sanctification, **the place of our meeting with Him**. Honouring the word we honor Him. Despising the Word we despise Him; and it is written—

"Him that honoureth me, I will honor, but he that despiseth me, shall be lightly esteemed."

—**Bro. Roberts**

Fraternal Gatherings

(If the Lord Will)

TORONTO. Ontario—Saturday and Sunday, October 6 & 7

Carpenters' Auditorium, 169 Gerrard Street East

Saturday, October 6, Afternoon

"THE RISING OF THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

1. The Way of the Kings Out of a Sun's Risings.
2. Behold, I Come as a Thief.
3. Blessed Is He That Watcheth, And Keepeth His Garments.

Saturday, October 6, Evening

"EVEN SO COME. LORD JESUS!"

Sunday, October 7

BREAKING OF BREAD and LECTURE in SAME HALL AS ABOVE.

Write to: Bro. Gibson, 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ont.

EDITORIAL:

"Your First Love"

"We have become associates of the Anointed, if indeed we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm to the end"—Hebrews 3:14 (Diag.)

When we think of the word "confidence," the idea of *trustworthiness, or reliability*, is presented to the mind, or it might be the divulging of some private matter to a friend, to whom we explain that our act is done "in confidence."

In the quotation at the top of this page, we have an entirely different usage of the word. The literal meaning of the Greek word rendered "confidence" is "substratum," or "what stands under one"—something which underlies, or serves as a basis or foundation. In Heb. 11:1, this word is rendered "substance":

"Now faith is the substance (ground or confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

It is therefore convincingly evident that when the apostle speaks of "holding fast the beginning of our confidence," he is referring to "our first love," which was created within us when we came to a knowledge of the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. When we apprehended clearly the message of the Gospel, we believed what God has done in the past, and what He will do in the future; for we understood that—

"Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"—Heb. 11:6.

At that time, our gratitude was unbounded, and we could not find suitable words to express the grateful emotions that swelled up within us. The Bible was no longer a volume to rest on the bookshelf. It became a living book in which God has revealed Himself, and a future of glory and everlasting joy for those who love Him and keep His commandments.

The daily reading of the Word brought unspeakable joy into our hearts, as we meditated upon His precepts. We felt like the Psalmist, when he said—

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way"—Ps. 119:103-104.

We prayed morning, noon and night, and determined that we would do everything possible to make our calling and election sure. Our former way of living was cast aside, as we put on the new man in Christ Jesus, for we understood that we were no longer our own, having been purchased by Jesus' precious blood.

Our homes were governed by the principles of the Truth, and it was the guiding power of our daily lives. It became sacred to us, and our hearts burned within us as we gave attendance to exhortations, and listened to expositions of the Word in public lectures and Bible classes.

Sundays seemed a long way apart, as we waited patiently for the next one to come, so that we could assemble ourselves together to worship God in the beauty of holiness, and praise Him for all His wonderful works, and His goodness to the children of men.

The weekly remembrance of Christ was approached with deep reverence, and heartfelt gratitude for the great work accomplished by Jesus on our behalf. The emblems were never taken without having followed, during the previous week, Paul's advice (2 Cor. 13:5, RSV) to—

"Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test."

The company of those who knew and loved the truth was always preferred above those by whom we were surrounded in the world, and we spoke often one to another concerning our walk in the Truth, and the glories of the Age to Come.

Our new habits and actions adopted in harmony with the profession of our faith soon marked us as being different from those who love the world, and all that is in it, and God was glorified by our faithful walk in the newness of life to which we were called by the gospel.

The Sunday meetings and the weekly Bible classes were the focal point in our lives. Exhortations became our rule of action, and we listened attentively so that we could extract from them such thoughts as were necessary to form a basis of our self-examination. Other meetings were attended faithfully so that our knowledge and understanding of the way of the tree of life might be increased.

As a result of our reading of the Word of God, we soon realized that the Truth is not "progressive," but a *fixed principle* to which we must adapt ourselves. Therefore we determined that we would be—

"Rooted and built up in him (Jesus Christ), and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving"—Col. 2:7.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God"—Ephes. 3:17-19.

During this period of our first love, or the beginning of our confidence, we fully realized our weaknesses and shortcomings, and our entire dependence upon the mercy of God. We also understood that our lives are "but a vapor," and that we were living on the threshold of the appearance of Jesus.

The reality of the wickedness that surrounds us in this crooked and perverse generation, forced itself upon us, and we pleaded with our heavenly Father to have mercy upon us, and give us strength to overcome the weakness of the flesh, and enable us to do that which is well-pleasing in His sight.

Thus we responded to the call of the Gospel—a high and holy calling. For, through it, we have been called to glory and virtue—*called to be sons of God*. It is testified that when Jesus appears in his kingdom and glory, they that are with him are called, and chosen and faithful.

There is no human joy, or earthly pleasure, so rapturous and inconceivable as that which will electrify those who will be with Jesus in the Age to Come. Only those will be there who "*have held fast the beginning of their confidence firm to the end.*" —Editor.

The Ten Horns

"The 10 Horns which thou sawest are 10 Kings"—Rev. 17:10

By BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

Horns are the symbols of power exerted by strength of arms, because such beasts as have horns make use of them as their arms. As the symbols of strength they are used in Psa. 18:2. They are also used to denote *regal* power, and when they are distinguished by number, they signify so many monarchies. Thus "horn" signifies a monarchy in Jer. 48:25. And in Zech. 1:18 the Four Horns are the 4 great monarchies which had each of them subdued the Jews. See also Dan. 8:20-22.

Horns upon a wild beast are not only expressive of powers, but also of such powers as are *tyrannical, ravenous and at enmity with God and His saints*, as in Dan. 8.

The Horns of the Sea Monster of Rev. 13:1 represent 10 Kingdoms established by the Barbarians of the Abyss upon all that Mediterranean territory conquered by them from the Roman Dragon. This appears from the testimony in v. 2 that—

"The Dragon yielded to him his power, and his throne, and an extensive jurisdiction."

In relinquishing them to the Beast, he yielded them to the Beast's appendages—the Horns and Mouth—as well.

In Rev. 17 John was told the 10 horns were symbolic of *kingdoms*:

"The 10 horns which thou sawest are 10 kings, which have received no kingdom as yet"
(v. 12).

That is, they had received no kingdom at the time the interpreter was talking with John. Daniel (7:23) gives the same record. He had said that he wished to know the truth represented by the 10 horns upon the Fourth Beast's head, upon which it was stated to him that—

"The 10 horns out of this kingdom are 10 kings that shall arise."

—and those (in v. 9) are styled the "thrones" which are to be "cast down" when the Ancient of Days comes to sit in judgment upon them. And this judgment *John* indicates in the words—

"These (10 Horns) shall make war upon the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him (the Saints of the Holy City) are called, chosen and faithful" (Rev. 17:14).

The geographical extent of the Roman Habitable upon which the barbaric tribes of the abyss established themselves with feudal sovereignty, was the *Mediterranean West*. They have to be enumerated by the names they bore in the period when they were engaged in establishing themselves upon that territory.

The symbol requires at least 11 abyssal tribes—ten for the horns, and one or more for the Seventh Head. The following is the list that seems to me authorized by history: Visigoths, Vandals, Huns, Burgundians, Gepidae, Lombards, Franks, Suevi, Alans, Bavarians. These were the founders of the Horn-Kingdoms of the Beast.

This divided form of Mediterranean Europe has continued for ages, even to the present time; though the number of its divisions has not always been, nor is it now, ten. The prophecy does not

require that the number of the kingdoms should be invariable. There were 10 in the period of their foundation, and from this fact they have acquired the symbolic designation of the "Ten Horns."

The emergence of the wild Beast of the Sea is not to be regarded as having been accomplished in a moment or a brief space, but as having occupied such a period as would naturally be required for the invasion of the empire of the Catholic Dragon by many separate tribes migrating from vast distances, engaging in numerous wars, and finally, after victory, establishing new and independent governments.

Nor are the chiefs who ruled them after the conquest of parts of the empire, to be considered as having assumed that relation in which they are symbolized by the *Horns* while they remained in subordination to Rome.

They emerged from the Sea as dynasties *when, by concession or victory, they became rulers of portions of the empire in independence of that power.* The institutions of the Horns, therefore, took place at different periods, and they were those that subsisted when the conquest of the Western Empire was completed and the imperial power extinguished—A. D. 476.

On the conquest of Italy and termination of imperial authority by the deposition of the last emperor Augustulus by Odoacer the Herulian Goth (A. D. 475), the barbarians of the apocalyptic abyss held possession of the whole western division of the Latin Sea (with the exception of a part of Gaul), and were distributed under 10 kingly governments.

1. The VISIGOTHS (West Goths), as the "Hail and Fire mingled with Blood" of the *First* Wind Trumpet, descended upon Greece under the leadership of ALARIC, and afterwards, having ravaged Illyria, Lombardy and Italy, laid siege to Rome. In A. D. 408 they passed from Italy into the south of France, and maintained a kingdom there till 506 when, being driven by the Franks into Spain, they wrested a part of it, Gallicia, from the Suevi, and in 585 extended their sway over the whole Spanish peninsula.

2. The VANDALS entered Gaul A. D. 406. They soon passed into Spain, and after occupying a part of that Mediterranean province nearly 20 years, crossed into Roman Africa (A. D. 427), wrested it from the Catholic Dragon, set up an independent kingdom under GENSERIC, and ruled it until 533. The kingdom was founded under the sounding of the *Second* Wind Trumpet, when a Great Mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea.

3. The HUNS planted themselves in the vicinity of the Danube A.D. 370. Under ATтила (A. D. 451) they descended into Thrace to within about 30 miles of Constantinople. Turning westward, they passed through Macedonia, Pannonia, Noricum (region of present Hungary and Austria), crossed the Danube and Rhine near their sources. He pursued his march through Belgium, then returned through France and Italy, and died at his seat of government near the Danube. This was the course of the great Blazing Star of the *Third* Wind Trumpet, the remains of whose dominion exists in present-day Hungary.

4. The BURGUNDIANS established themselves in Belgic Gaul A. D. 407. After a few years they obtained possession of Savoy, and subsequently of Gaul on the Rhone, and maintained a separate kingdom till 524, when they were conquered by the Franks. On the division of the Frank kingdom, it again became a separate state and continued such several centuries.

5. The GEPIDAE established themselves in Illyria (now styled Dalmatia) on the Adriatic bay of the Mediterranean, whence they exercised authority over the old country of Dacia. Their kingdom lasted to 566, till destroyed by the Lombards.

6. The LOMBARDS, on the dissolution of the empire of Attila (whose standard they followed) took possession of a portion of Pannonia (part of Hungary). Subsequently to their conquest

of the Gepidae, they extended their possessions as far as Bavaria (568). They conquered Italy, where they maintained themselves till near the close of the eighth century, when they were "plucked up by the roots" (Dan. 7:8).

7. The FRANKS is a name assumed by a confederacy of German tribes. It signifies the *Freemen*. In their inaccessible morasses, redolent of mud, water, and *frogs*, they used to shake defiance at the Roman arms.

When the time arrived for the ascending of the Diademed Horns out of the sea, they instinctively obeyed the summons of the First Trumpet, and in A. D. 407 entered Gaul. Within a few years they established a kingdom upon the Rhine which they continued to maintain and advance until in the sixth century it extended over the whole territory of modern France.

8. The SUEVI filled the interior Germanian countries of the abyss. A short time before the sounding of the First Trumpet they united with the Allemani. They passed through Gaul, conquered Galicia in Spain, and maintained themselves there as a Diademed Horn of the Sea till A. D. 585.

9. The ALANS crossed the Pyrenees into Spain, settling in Portugal. Another body of Alans settled in Gaul. They repulsed Attila on his invasion of Gaul A. D. 451, and were stationed in the center of the army by which he was defeated in the great battle of Chalons. They continued to subsist as a separate people until conquered by the Franks about 510 A. D.

10. The BAVARIANS. The present Bavaria in the time of the Romans formed part of the Dragon empire. The Bavarian Horn is noticed by Gibbon as forming one of the boundaries of the Ostrogothic kingdom under Theodoric. And again he says, "The Lombard kingdom extended east, north, and west, as far as the confines of the Avars, the Bavarians, and the Franks."

* * *

Such then is my list of the ten notable abyssal *Horns of the Sea*. Though separate dynasties, they are very properly united in a single symbol, and exhibited as one great combination of tyrannical states, from the *identity of their origin in the abyss, the oneness of their policy*—Rev. 17:13, and the *similarity of these rulers*.

This European Commonwealth was composed of monarchies that were all feudatories of the Dragon, for Gibbon shows that they all adopted, in a great degree, the laws of the ancient empire as their common law. They all came at length to submit themselves to the Papal Yoke—a power which was rising with them out of the Sea, whose system of falsehood they cooperated in imposing upon their subjects at all hazards.

They may truly be styled the Papal Horns for their history has proved them to have been, in all their past career, the blind instruments of the Name of Blasphemy upon the Seven Heads.

"THEN SHALL WE KNOW EVEN AS WE ARE KNOWN"

In speaking then, of the saints ruling the world, we are not to picture to ourselves the world governed by the poor fainting, failing, ungifted men and women who constitute the saints in the days of their probation.

The saints in the age to come will be a noble, vigorous, beautiful and brilliant order of beings, equal to the angels: the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty in the final aspect of their development.

As we see them now, they are only in the preliminary stage of their development, poor, weak, and ungifted. In one thing only are they rich, without which they are not saints. They are "rich in

faith," without which it is impossible to please God; and this one thing is their essential qualification.
—Bro. Roberts.

Teach Us to Number Our Days

“So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom”—Psalm 90:12.

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

We have been reminded that our meeting this morning is a *matter of command*. It is well it is so. If it were left to inclination, we would often be absent when we are present.

It is good to be present. *It is better than we would think if we were merely left to theorize about it*. We would be liable to imagine, as some people DO imagine, that, knowing the Truth, it is all one whether we stay at home or come to the meeting. It is *not* all one. God Who commanded this meeting knows us better than we do ourselves. He commanded it because He knows us. *The Truth will lose its power over us if we "forsake the assembly of ourselves together, as the manner of some is."*

Let us see, however, that we "come together for the better and not for the worse." The brethren at Corinth, according to what Paul says, came together for the worse. If they did this with the very gifts of the Spirit in their midst, how possible it is that we may do so if we are not on our guard!

The mode of conducting the meeting and the topics chosen for the theme of exhortation, have much to do with this. If there is no recognized order of procedure, or if there is want of punctuality in the hour of attendance, or if matters of debate or matters of a merely business or local character are introduced, there will be great danger of failing in the object of assembling.

That object is *edification*—a *building up* of the mind in the confidence and comfort of the Truth. This is done by having the things of the Truth passed before us in such a way that the mind is able to lay hold of them with *clearness and joy*. Reading, prayer, singing, exhortation—all have this effect if rightly attended. Foolish, unlearned questions avoid; all strife exclude.

Let the word of Christ be ministered *in its richness*. If there is no brother present capable of speaking to the edification of those who hear—(a man may be able to speak and not able to edify: a man may speak to his own edification and not to that of others: the hearers are the judges)—if no such brother is present, then let an absent brother do it.

I have heard of spiritual, encouraging letters from correspondents being read with advantage in such a case. Others have read extracts from Dr. Thomas. Some read from Seasons of Comfort.

Doubtless, it is best when the presence of brethren able to edify the rest renders all resort to such aids unnecessary: but where there are no such brethren, good sense and an ardent appreciation of spiritual things will sanction them.

Then we have been reminded that we are *waiting for the Lord's return*. There is an aspect of this which grows more and more powerful with my mind the longer I live. It is perhaps a little difficult to express. It is this—that *we are nearer to the Lord's coming than we may be in the habit of thinking*.

We think of the Lord's coming in connection with the signs of the times—which is right, because the Lord's coming is connected with signs, and the signs are visible: but these signs take longer to unfold than we expect in our first fresh ardor; and there is apt to creep over the mind a sort of feeling that many things may yet divide us from the coming of the Lord.

We look back to the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the long-drawn, weary complicated programme of events that has filled up the time since. And we are liable to look forward to the future with a sense of the ages that are behind us, as if the future acted on the past as a mirror acts on what is behind a person as he walks towards it.

Now, there is in all this a good deal of what we might call spontaneous fallacy or self deception. The fact is—and we do wisely to familiarize our minds with the fact—that *the interval that yet lies between us and the Lord's coming may have no existence for us*, or at all events a very brief existence indeed. Death will destroy that interval for us as effectually as if the angel of the Lord appeared to us suddenly in the midst of our occupations to tell us the Lord had come.

We may assent to this without feeling its full force. There is great power in it when realized. We miss the power of it through thinking that death will be a long time in coming to us. It may, but it may not. We presume on the average of human life, but that average may not be ours.

A comparatively young brother (only 27) died a week ago, who had every prospect within four days of his death that he would have a long and healthy career.

What has happened to him might happen to any of us; and it would mean that in a moment we would be taken from the midst of our mortal cares and occupations into the presence of the solemn, though glorious, realities that are associated with Christ at his coming.

It would *seem to us* a momentary, an instantaneous, transition. Of course, it would not be really so in relation to the progress of events in the universe, but it would be really so in relation to our own feelings, which in this sense are everything to each of us.

We will be out of the grave before ever we are aware that we have gone in. In this case, the signs of the times and the weary evolution, it may be, of our own anxious lives, will be stopped and abolished in a moment.

Is it not wise and helpful to carry about with us a sense of this imminent possibility? The power of the idea will be instinctively felt by every one, and its value also as a corrective of life in all its relations. We can imagine, for example, how powerfully up-borne in a spiritual direction our deceased young brother would have felt during the month before his death if he had known that in four weeks, his course would be finished.

The advantage of exercising our thoughts in this way lies in the similar stimulus it will impart to us if we realize that we may but a short time have to do with the circumstances of life as it now is, and may in a brief period of time stand face to face with the Lord Jesus who was alive ages before we were born, and will live forever, whatever may become of us.

If men could carry this thought of common sense more constantly and vividly about with them than is commonly the case, things would be different with them on many points. Many things would receive a less anxious attention, and some things would be better attended to than they are.

This line of reflection is but the expansion of the thought expressed in the 38th and 90th Psalms—

"Lord make me to know mine end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. Behold Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before Thee . . . **So teach us to number our days** that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

This *measuring of our days*—this endeavoring to withstand the deceptive impressions of sense and to penetrate through all the appearances and the feelings of life to the naked fact that *we are all the time on the brink of existence*, as it were, and may at any moment disappear from the land of the living

and the realm of being, as completely as the collapsing bubble on the water, is certainly calculated to lead us to "apply our hearts unto wisdom."

The people around us are busy applying their hearts—*but not to wisdom*. They apply them to everything but this. Wisdom is with them either a matter of aversion or a matter of scorn. We are liable to be carried away with the prevailing taste. It is a broad stream on which the world is drifting to destruction. We come to the table of the Lord to *apply our hearts to wisdom*.

We do so in the reading of the Oracles of God. They are a continual call of wisdom to us. They are God's written voice, by which alone we have access in our day to His mind. There is no truth less appreciated by the mass of mankind than this. There is none in such danger of disappearing from the practical recognitions of the educated. We have recently had to insist on it with a special emphasis. We cling to it as to a lifebuoy in the surging waters.

In the whole of the Scriptures—in every part—in Genesis as in the Prophets—in the Psalms as in the Apocalypse—we are in contact with the authorized expression of the mind of God in some phase or other.

Consequently, *as we listen, whatever part is being read, we are "applying our hearts" to that wisdom* which purifies the present, gives stability and comfort to the remainder of our mortal days, few or many; and enriches for us the future with an exhaustless inheritance of well-being and joy.

What do we learn as we listen? That "*The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.*" We may think this trite, and even questionable. Increasing age in the Truth will show us the truth and depth of the saying. We cannot fear (in the sense of revere) where we do not know. So to *know God* is the first thing:

"This is eternal life, that they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

We can only know by *acquaintance*, and we can only make acquaintance in this matter in the Scriptures. We have read this morning that—

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

A man must be a fool to say this: and many say it in their heart who do not say it openly. It is contrary to the most obvious considerations of reason. A man has only to look around and note the myriad indications of contrivance in things small and things great to feel an intuitive certainty that there is somewhere an intelligence as much above man's as the works of nature are above the works of art.

And then when he reflects upon the fact (evidenced by the many things in heaven and earth) that the universe has not always existed, he is taken away back to the beginning, however remote, and made to feel that that which then was (by whatever name called) must have possessed the power and wisdom to elaborate the material creation as we now see it.

Human thought calls it "force" without allowing the wisdom and the power. The Bible exhibition of this beginning is the only one that meets the demands of reason. "*In the beginning—God:*" This accounts for all. It gives us the wisdom and the power equal to the production of what is.

"In the beginning—force": *this* accounts for *nothing*: it neither accounts for the work of creation when it began nor for the previous quiescence of the cosmic energy.

Let reason rule, and God will be joyfully perceived and received as the everlasting foundation of all things. Only the man in whom reason is weak, or warped, or unenlightened, will say, "There is no God:" and the Bible gives us the right name for a man with reason in such a condition.

When we turn from these vast problems of reason to the actual facts exhibited in human history, we find still stronger reason for agreeing with David about the man who says there is no God. For here God stands revealed before us. Here is this *Bible* whose existence and character cannot be accounted for on any other principle.

There is the *Jewish race* that "Roams the scorning world around"—their history inexplicable apart from God's hand.

There is the ascendancy of the *name of Christ* among the civilized nations of mankind, which has no feasible explanation apart from Christ's resurrection and the apostles' miracles.

There is, besides all this, the extraordinary fact, that, of the *hundreds of prophecies* of the Bible applicable to ages past and to times and events now current, *there has not been one failure*.

When all these things are put together, their effect is overpowering. Men may fail to see the facts through other things blinding their eyes, but the facts are there, and no *logical* mind can miss the conclusion—the glorious conclusion—to which they point—that *God is*, and that *God has spoken*, and consequently we have this exhilarating truth to rest on, that—

"He is the Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Wherever we look in upon the matters contained in the Bible, we find the work of God in progress in some form or other, and *all one work*—not disjointed acts having no connection one with another, but things and acts that form part of a connected plan reaching from the beginning of things upon the earth to the second appearing of Christ in power and great glory. Let us note the illustration of this point our readings today have afforded—Exodus, the Psalms, Romans.

In *Exodus*, it is Israel in Egypt and Moses born. Here is the beginning of things in relation to revelation on the earth. The form of that revelation Paul defines in Heb. 1:1, when he says—

"God, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets."

Here in Exodus we have the commencement of the process. The foundation was then laid for the things that came after and which culminated in the appearance and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. The things spoken of were connected with all that we read of later, down to the closing prayer in the Revelation—

"Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly."

They all pertain to Israel and the God of Israel. They are all beautiful and righteous and full of hope. Rightly estimated, *they are the only interesting and truly important things upon earth*. All human things apart from these are transient as a flower and worthless as the tinsel on the toys of children.

The purpose that God has purposed in connection with Israel has in it the root of every good the heart can desire. God is in that purpose and that work all the way through, and God is everlasting, and from Him will come that perfect adjustment of human life in all its relations which is essential to the realization of the end and aim for which the planet was made.

It is an uninformed state of mind that sees nothing but narrowness and sterility and obsolescence in the Jews and their literature. The Jews themselves are certainly an uninviting theme, but it is very different with their history and what is involved in that history as regards hope for the future and comfort for the present.

The Bible does not ask us to look at the Jews for what they are *in themselves*. It asks us to look at the *God* of the Jews, Who has chosen them for His own end and Who says in reference to their restoration—

"Not for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel, be it known unto you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own evil way" (Eze. 36:32).

Acquaintance with the Bible enables us to look at the subject as the Bible asks us to look at it, and thus we steer clear of the stumbling-blocks encountered by those who look at it from the outside, who see only the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of a perverse race, and who miss the glory to be seen by those who go inside of the subject and see it from the standpoint of God's Own purpose of goodness.

In our reading from the Psalms (53-55) we are not with a different affair though it might seem so. We are only at *another stage of the same thing*. We are with Israel seated in the Holy Land about 500 years after Moses led them out of Egypt. We are with David enthroned as their king, and writing by the Spirit of God upon him.

His theme is related to the purpose of God with Israel. *He laments the obtuseness of the common run of people with regard to God*, and the consequent prevalence of violence and darkness. He longs for what God has purposed with Israel—

"Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!"

He groans with pain of heart, and confesses that fear and horror have invaded his soul, by reason of the activity and success of evil men who have no fear of God before their eyes.

In all this, *he outlines a mental condition that answers exactly to what is experienced by men in every age, who believe in the God of Israel and have made His Word their portion*. It is all within the compass of the ground marked out and all built on the foundation laid at the beginning, when God openly interfered to bring Israel out of Egypt by Moses.

And are we on new and strange ground in Romans 7 and 8? By no means. It is the *same* work and the same theme a thousand years later than David. The writer is a Jew—a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He is writing to believers in the hope of Israel.

How comes he to be doing so? *Because Christ had called him*. Who was Christ? *The Son promised to David*: begotten by the Spirit of God of David's seed.

The promise had long been on record. It had but recently been fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, who, at the age of thirty, had presented himself to Israel as the Son of God and the heir to David's throne, and having incurred the enmity of the ruling classes, had been put to death, as pre-arranged in the wisdom of God for the accomplishment of a purpose not contemplated by them—the *taking away of sin, and the establishment of a basis of reconciliation with God through Christ*.

This Jesus, in three days raised from the dead, and in forty days more exalted to the God of Israel's right hand—was now preached by the apostles (to whom Paul, a persecutor, had been added in a special manner). He was preached as "The Way" to forgiveness and hope and life—the only Name given under heaven for the salvation of men.

Paul, in the chapters read, is writing to those who had received Jesus so preached by him—writing to establish them in the faith of Christ, and to enlighten them on many deep matters connected with it, with a view to their preparation for that final attainment of "glory, honor, and immortality" which he told them was the end of his work with them in Christ.

He tells them in ch. 9 that the *heedlessness and unbelief of the vast mass of Israel* will not interfere with God's purpose with them—that the Word of God could not fail in its effect, and that the oppositions of the unbelieving class were only a part of the process by which the intended result would ultimately be reached; just as Pharaoh's opposition to Moses and Aaron was a part of the instrumentality by which the power of God was shown.

All this he sets forth for the comfort of those who are "the called according to His purpose." *All things*, he says, *work together for their good*. Their very afflictions befall them as a means of preparation for the glorious use that God purposes with them in the glorious ages to come. He asks—

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"
—and declares that nothing created in heaven or earth, and nothing that can happen in the form of the direct disaster, can—

". . . separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
—the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of God.

In all this, you perceive, we are in the current of things started in the beginning with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. *It is one Purpose, one Work, one Hope from the beginning*. Our wisdom is to hold close and fast to it, giving ourselves daily to the reading of the Word and to prayer, and addicting ourselves to those varied services which, though bootless in the eyes of men, the Scriptures assure us are precious in the eyes of God, and will at last be acknowledged and rewarded by Him in circumstances of great honor and joy everlasting.

Ecstasy and unbelief may co-exist, as in the case of the highly-wrought "revivalist" who mistakes the electrical excitement of the brain and nervous system for "religion," and rejects the testimony of God and His prophets and apostles while shouting "Glory, Hallelujah!" —**Bro. Roberts**.

Blessed He That Knows Accurately

STUDIES IN THE APOCALYPSE — No. 1

The careful Bible student who is deeply interested in searching out and comprehending all the depth, riches and beauty of God's wondrous message to man, will not be satisfied with a casual or surface reading of the Scriptures. In many passages the diligent seeker after truth will be repaid for his effort by a broader conception of the Spirit's words, if due attention is given to the context surrounding the words, the time and circumstances connected with their revelation, and the meaning attached to them in the original by those who first read them.

This is especially true of The Apocalypse, or The Revelation. This is a book of symbol, and the hidden mysteries it holds remain forever locked and sealed to the man of the world, no matter how much learning in the wisdom of men is applied to it. The key that unlocks the divine message therein contained is in the hands of those to whom the book was sent, and to all others it will always remain an impenetrable enigma.

The servants of God, with a wealth of knowledge concerning the things that had been written afore time by inspiration, and *who approach it prayerfully and humbly with a burning desire to know what God has revealed* therein for the enlightenment of His children, will find its pages speaking to them in language they can understand, and its hidden symbols standing out before them in bold relief, to their utmost delight.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show to his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John."

This first verse shows that the message was sent to "the *servants of God*," through the apostle John, and that the language of it was not to be interpreted literally. "To *signify*" is to present a matter by means of signs or symbols. Being sent in this way the book would be unintelligible, except to that class to whom it was sent; for without the background of God's revealed plan of salvation for man, as brought to light in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, the entire book would have no meaning at all.

John was instructed to whom he should send the book, after he had written it: not out into the pagan world of that day, nor to the scattered Jews who had rejected the Gospel message:

"Send to the **Seven Ecclesias** which are in Asia."

But it is interesting to notice that this apocalyptic message was not sent to the ecclesias in their early history immediately after Pentecost, when they were being formed and organized by the tireless efforts of the apostles and disciples. With the spirit gifts as a witness and a guide to their work, and with the several epistles of the apostles as a further source of instruction, inspiration and guidance, the body of believers were being enlarged, consolidated and built up in the one Faith.

"He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, to the measure and stature of the fulness of Christ."

God does things in the right way and at the right time. The work of edifying the body, and bringing it in the unity of the Faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, had been going on among the ecclesias for about 60 years when the Apocalypse was sent to them by the apostle John.

Full scope and opportunity was thus afforded the ecclesias for that spiritual development that would prepare them to receive this "strong meat" of the Word (Heb. 5:14).

"Strong meat" (says the apostle Paul) "belongeth to them that are of full age, even to those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

By studying the messages directed to the seven ecclesias in chs. 2 and 3, it would appear that there were yet *many among the brethren who would find little in the book that would draw their attention and interest, and even if they tried, they would probably find it too hard for them*, in their poor state of spiritual life. The fact that Christ counselled them to anoint their eyes with eye-salve, shows that their perception was low.

The ones he commended for their faith, labor, patience and love, whose last works were more than the first, would be the strong, faithful ones who would grasp with eagerness the opportunity to spend their nights and days, absorbed in working out the mysteries of this last and final addition to the words of the Spirit in this dispensation. It was for *their sakes, and all like them*, that it was sent—not those who "had need of nothing."

But this personal message of Jesus to his servants, as it was sent out to the brethren of that day, carried with it a *special blessing for all able to receive it with understanding hearts*:

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (v. 3).

This verse will bear careful study; for the meaning of it is not apparent as it reads in the Common Version. The three key words are: "readeth," "hear," and "keep."

"*Readeth*" comes from the Greek *anaginosko*, and the meaning of the word, as given in Young's Concordance is "to know well, read." To read in this sense is to get the full significance of what the author intended to convey in the message—

"Let him that readeth understand" (Mark 13:14).

"*Hear*" is used here as generally in the New Testament to mean, "to give attention in an understanding way"—

"Blessed are your eyes for they see; and your ears for they hear,"
—said Jesus to those who *understood* his teaching.

"*Keep*" is a translation of the Greek *tereo*, and means to "keep, watch, observe." In other passages the same word has been translated by the English words: "hold fast, observe, preserve, reserve, watch." It is used in the passage,

"If ye love me, **keep** my commandments" (John 14:15).

It has been said that the success of bro. Thomas as an expositor of The Apocalypse was largely due to the *careful attention he gave to every word*. His translation of this verse reads:

"Blessed he that **knows accurately**, and they who **give heed** to the words of the prophecy, and **observe narrowly** the things which have been written in it; for the time is near."

It will be noticed at once that this is a very accurate and forceful interpretation of the original, and that the full significance of the key words are faithfully portrayed. For "readeth" he gives "*knows accurately*"; for "hear" he puts "*give heed*," and for "keep", "*observe narrowly*."

It is plain then that the Apocalypse was sent especially to the servants of God, and that a blessing was in it for those who know accurately, give heed to and observe narrowly the things written in it. To believers of all ages who received the book as a personal message from the God of heaven, this would be an incentive, a challenge that would stir within them a consuming desire to study the book and assimilate its glorious and enlightening message. It would reveal to them, in its seals, trumpets and vials, the course of events in relation to the saints and the powers of the world, that would finally consummate in the appearing of their Lord and Master in the earth again.

To lay the book aside and fail to know accurately, give heed to and observe narrowly the things written in it to the servants of God, with the excuse that its message is beyond our ability to comprehend, is to cast a reflection on the intelligence of its author, or to say in effect that we do not belong to the class to whom it was sent.

It is unthinkable that God, who knows our strength better than we do, would send us a book that we could not understand. The book itself is called the Revelation, or the Apocalypse, which means "an uncovering," a "revealing, or making known of things which in the past had not been understood."

No generation of God's people ever stood in greater need of a clear understanding of this divine revelation than we who live at that very epoch, under the 6th vial, in which the words apply:

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15).

What we lack in strength and ability to grasp its significance, will be abundantly supplied by our ever loving and merciful Father, if our own capacity is applied to the utmost in diligent application to the work.

"The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way . . . The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant." —E.W.B.

Jacob Was a Plain Man

"And the Lord said unto Rebekah, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger"—Gen. 25:23.

Here we see the beginning of two distinct classes of people, two great nations, which have—through the operations of God—influenced the history of other nations. Today the relationship between their descendants—Arab and Jew—has drawn the eyes of a fearful world.

The fact that the two babes struggled together within Rebekah set the pattern of their lives as nations during the centuries. This was told her in answer to her inquiry:

"If it be so, why am I thus?" (v. 22).

To the mind centered on the ultimate salvation offered by God, the answer provided a restatement of the redemptive principle of salvation after trial, and perfecting of character in the struggle against the sin-nature. The struggle of the two nations during succeeding years has been a witness—one of the Creator's many witnesses—of His purposes with mankind.

"He has not left Himself without witness."

Turning to the thought of the separation of the two boys at birth, we may detect more than natural parturition. It lays down the principle of the righteous being separated from the wicked—that there is no concord between Christ and Belial—

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17-18)

We are further informed that at birth Jacob seized Esau by the heel. The result of this apparently unimportant detail was:

"His name was called Jacob" (Gen. 25:26).

How illustrative of the impulses of the flesh is this incident! The name Jacob means "*supplanter*" or "*tripper up*." Unrestrained, this is the natural way the flesh operates: seeking advantage at the expense of another. This is a latent characteristic of the flesh, swelling into action as each opportunity arises.

This weakness in our natures must be overcome. The illustrations from the lives of the righteous are set in such a manner as to show us the supreme value of striving against this evil force within ourselves. The apex was reached in the life of the Master. He always did those things which pleased his Father. Paul confessed—

"When I would do good, evil is present with me—I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind" (Rom. 7:21-23).

There must be therefore the same concerted effort on the part of all God's saints to submit, without retaliation, to evil. "*Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field*"—Gen. 25:27.

Esau was a man who grew up without restraint of the natural impulses of the flesh. The basic lusts of our mortal frame were confirmed by his actions. Those traits which the world idolizes, which cause a man to be looked upon as courageous, strong and a sportsman, or good fellow are all comprehended in these few words—"a man of the field."

Once again the character of the flesh is pictorialized. The Hebrew for "field" signifies "to spread out; flat country or wild" thus that which is untamed or unrestrained. The same Hebrew original appears as "wild" in Lev. 26:22, where Moses tells Israel of God's proposed judgments upon them if they were disobedient to the will of the Creator—

"I will also send **wild** beasts among you."

The wild beasts were not only the natural predatory animals, but the nations of the world who know not the will of God. In Daniel they are all symbolized by beasts plundering the heritage of God. And amongst those national beasts who preyed upon Israel were the descendants of this *wild man of the field*, Esau.

"I said concerning the sons of men, that they might see that they themselves are beasts"
(Eccl. 3:18).

When Esau was born he was red—exceedingly so, to the extent that it became the basis of his name—Esau or Edom, meaning "red." The association of this color throughout the Scriptures is always with *sin*, or the sin-nature. It is portrayed vividly by type under the Mosaic Law, while Isaiah states (Isa. 1:18)—

"Though your sins be as **scarlet**, they shall be as white as snow; though they be **red like crimson**, they shall be as wool."

Esau then becomes a type of our basic sin-nature, which is so opposed to the will of God that Paul refers to it as "sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). And again, he had to confess—

"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18).

In Hebrews 12:16 Paul refers to Esau as a "*profane person*," because he sold his birthright for a morsel of meat. To satisfy his natural lusts he threw away relationship to the eternal covenant. How fittingly does this man then represent that principle within each of us which must be subjected, which must be kept under, if we are to attain unto the resurrection!

* * *

"*Jacob was a plain man*"—Gen. 25:21.

Verse 27 is set out in contrast form. We look then to see the difference between the two sons of Isaac. The word "*plain*" means "complete, gentle, dear, undefiled." Ps. 119:1 declares:

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way."

The word for "undefiled" in this verse is the same as rendered "plain" in Gen. 25:27. The margin in Psa. 119 renders "undefiled" as "perfect or sincere." A similar use occurs in Ps. 37:37—

"Mark the **perfect** man . . . for the end of that man is peace."

Here the translators have chosen the word 'perfect' to render the same original. It is interesting to note the rest of this verse for it sets out the ultimate destiny of those who are undefiled or perfect.

Their *end* is peace. Expressed in such a manner it allows for an intervening period of trial and preparation. Paul said if we are without chastisement we are strangers, not sons.

So it was in Paul's own case. He told the Philippians that he was made physically to know the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, was made conformable unto his death, that he might attain unto the same resurrection.

Perfection is only relative while we are mortal. It often applies to those whose whole hearts are directed toward doing the will of God, though they are not perfect in the absolute sense. No man could be so classed, apart from our Lord and Savior, and he also bore our imperfect nature.

Though we may have a perfect *desire* to fulfil the Creator's pleasure, yet we all fall short of the mark of perfection set by the Pattern in the heavens. David, who was a man after God's own heart, failed in attaining complete perfection. These things should not discourage us, or cause us to be dispirited. Each failure should be analyzed, and the lessons impressed, enabling us to rise higher toward the goal of perfection.

In the life of Jacob we note the same preparatory lessons equipping him to be classed as a "plain" or "perfect" man. It is only by the prospect of the life of trial which he endured faithfully that such an appellation could apply to him.

The same Hebrew original is used in Job 1:1—

"There was a man in the land of Uz; whose name was Job; and that man was perfect (plain) and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."

The additional adjectives in this verse encircle the word "perfect" and give us the correct meaning as applied to the saints of God. As we read in Song of Solomon 6:9—

"My dove, my undefiled, is but one."

Paul told the Philippians (3:12) he had not attained unto perfection in the complete sense, but illustrated the method he used to that end, adding that all of like mind would do the same.

"Not as though I were already perfect: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ."

He reached, or stretched, or *agonized* forward as a runner in a race. He did not let the things behind him distract his attention from the one object in view. He said he was "following after." It was as though Christ was out in front of him, and he was straining every nerve and muscle to attain to the mark without distraction. No regrets of what he had left behind in Sodom (as Lot's wife) could dissuade his efforts.

The word for "press" also contains the idea of "fleeing from something." He was fleeing from the ever-present danger of sin in his members, striving to keep it under so that he would not be the slave of sin.

Turning again to the book of Genesis and particularly to Gen. 25:27, we by our considerations learn much of the character of Jacob. We find in these simple expressions that Jacob was influenced by a force higher than the natural instincts of the flesh. These forces were moving within his heart, though, as in the case of all God's servants, the manifestation would be by the things which he suffered.

* * *

“. . . dwelling in tents"—Gen. 25:27.

We read in Paul's letter to the Hebrews (11:8-9) that Jacob was a dweller in tents with his father and grandfather:

"By faith Abraham, sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."

This description associated with the elect of God shows that they are separate from the world in their life's activities; that they as beacons do not mix with the surrounding darkness.

Paul said that while they sojourned in Canaan they had no permanent city or dwelling place. When strife arose between Abraham's herdmen and those of Lot, Abraham gave Lot choice as to where he would dwell. Lot chose the established cities of the Jordan plain, first pitching his tent over against Sodom, and then being found sitting in the gate of the city.

But Abraham continued in the hill country, dwelling in tents, confessing thereby he was a stranger and pilgrim on the earth.

Like all the faithful he was seeking a city which had foundations (Sodom had none). He wanted to become part of the Holy City Community, that glorious New Jerusalem which will soon be manifested for all the world to see (Heb. 11:16)—

"They desire a better country, that is an heavenly (having a Divine government and permanent foundations) wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city."

The Hebrew word for "tent" is *ohel*, and means "to shine" or "to be visible at a distance," as a tent on an expanse of desert, as in eastern countries. This is a fitting illustration of how the servants of God should stand out clearly for the world to see—

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matt. 5:14).

And the Master said, continuing his discourse on the Mount:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven."

The object of the shining is for the praise of the Creator. And we observe again the operation of *God working through us* for the filling of this earth with His Glory—

"It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:13:15).

We recall that it was told Rebekah that Jacob should rule over Esau. The flesh reasoning upon this promise exalted itself to start with in Jacob as he eagerly sought the pre-eminence, perhaps for the glory of position. But in the purpose of God all flesh must become humble before Him, and the Lord alone shall be exalted. Said Peter (1 Pet. 5:6)—

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God."

The perfection which is depicted of the saints had to be *learnt*, and that by the things which were suffered or endured. Perfection is developed by probation, the probationary sojourn unto which the Creator has seen fit to subject the race.

"*And Jacob sod pottage*"—Gen. 25:29.

Esau, coming from the field weary and faint with hunger, is induced to sell his birthright—the rights and privileges of the firstborn for one meal. Here we have the natural cleverness of man put into the picture as Jacob on a human basis tries to rush the purposes of God. But all Scripture tells us that the promise is unobtainable by any human means.

Man's service, even when in harmony with Divine requirements, is wholly inadequate to merit salvation. It remains in the realm of Divine mercy. Rather than endeavoring to get the better of one another, we must constantly submerge self in an endeavor to serve one another without recompense of any sort—to empty ourselves for God's service. Listen to the Master as he epitomizes our required walk and conduct (Matt. 5:38-48)—

"If any man will sue thee and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

"It hath been said, An eye for an eye ... I say, Resist not evil.

"Whoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

"Love your enemies; bless them which curse you."

This is the Divine avenue to perfection, to become like our Heavenly Father and indeed be His children.

"Be ye therefore perfect (plain), even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Christ gave us the example as well as these words of His Father. Let us follow after him, pressing forward to the mark—fleeing from all fleshly impulses; and the besetting sin. Rather should Jacob have been eager to aid and assist his brother Esau:

"If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink" (Rom. 12:20).

But Jacob again took his brother by the heel and tripped him; he supplanted him once more.

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son

"Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind?"

PART THREE

On a previous occasion we had under consideration the Name by which the Deity chose to reveal Himself as His "*Memorial unto all generations*," the understanding whereof will be helpful to us in arriving at a clear conception of "the Great Salvation" of which the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, under Moses, is a guarantee—the inceptive act on the part of the Deity which will ultimate in "the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" to which men are now invited by the Gospel.

We must never lose sight of those wonderful words of Christ to the woman of Samaria when he declared to her, "*Salvation is of the Jews*," for they constitute the key to the understanding of all God's dealings with Israel. We are, therefore, pursuing an enquiry which is of vital importance to all who would participate in that "Great Salvation" which is the subject matter of the Gospel.

It is only by a knowledge of the transactions of God with Israel that we can acquire that faith in Him which gives Him pleasure and is essential to salvation, for we can only learn of Him in His dealings with and declarations concerning that nation as the nation in connection with which it is His

purpose to bless all families of the earth, as promised to Abraham. It is, therefore, truly a nation *divinely formed* with a *divine object*.

With these thoughts before us we still linger at the foot of the Mount Horeb in the presence of the divine representative of the Memorial Name, and Moses, the servant of God, chosen by Him to be the honored instrument in His hands for the mighty work of the deliverance of His people, Israel, from the cruel bondage under which they groaned in Egypt, with a view to plant them in the land promised to the fathers, as God's nation and people.

We listen with rapt attention and eager desire to the communication to Moses of the divine thoughts and purposes expressed by the angel in his instructions concerning the stupendous enterprise upon which they were about to enter.

We might feel disposed to think that already the evidence presented to Moses at the burning bush, and the clearness with which the object of the angel's visit to Moses had been expressed, and the emphatic assurances of divine co-operation in the undertaking, would have had the effect of setting all his fears aside. But this was not so; much more was needed to be done to engender in the breast of the servant of God that "*full assurance of faith*" so necessary to the exalted position for which he was being prepared.

The angel therefore proceeded to furnish him with instructions as to how he was to proceed in the matter, and divinely illumines his mind as to the result of the proposed divine interference. It was now, therefore, a question of faith in the message and messenger of God; and in order to fully establish this, Moses was permitted to see such forms of divine power and miraculous display that he might no longer have any doubt that God would be with him in the matter. The instructions of the angel to Moses were that he should—

"Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying,

"I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt; and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.

"And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him,

"The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.

"And I am sure the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out My hand, and smite Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

"And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: but every woman shall borrow (RV—ask) of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians"

(Exo. 3:16-22).

It is impossible to conceive of a clearer or simpler statement of the issue about to be fought out between the Deity, on behalf of His people Israel, and the Egyptian power which held them in bondage. To suggest that the record with which we are dealing is of a "mythical" character would be to perpetrate the grossest folly of which ignorance or wilful blindness is capable, even apart from all external corroboration which exists in the many recent discoveries of Egyptian records coeval with the circumstances and fact of the sojourn of Israel in Egypt which coincide with, and clearly demonstrate, that fact; and that Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, preceded them there.

The Bible record of Israel cannot be disposed of on any reasonable grounds, or even be rejected without violating reason, and utterly ignoring every human means and method which enable us to judge of evidence not within our own cognizance.

In fact it *cannot even be dispensed with*; for, without it, how is the existence of the people of Israel to be accounted for?—a people contemporary with Egypt, Assyria, Babylon (a fact also externally evidenced by the records of Assyria and Babylon) and Rome. For whence came they with all their traditions of Moses and the prophets, and of a history behind them entirely in harmony with Bible records?

In those records we have a clear, consistent, and explanatory account, not only of the time and circumstances of their sojourn in Egypt but of the *origin and purpose* for which that people was divinely created and providentially directed there (Gen. 12:2-3; 46:2-4; Isa. 43:7, 21; 44:1).

Is it not reasonable that the Creator should bring into existence for His Own beneficent purposes a people who in His providential supervision of and revelation to them, should through them bestow benefits and blessings to all mankind? Yea, verily, it is the *highest form of reason and beneficence*.

But we must not stay here longer. The careful reader will no doubt perceive that the deliverance contemplated was an utter impossibility apart from the proposed divine co-operation with human instrumentality. He will also perceive that it is not only an historical fact that we are dealing with, but a fact carrying with it a *meaning and assurance fraught with the ultimate accomplishment of the greatest good to poor mortal humanity*. It is with that meaning which we have principally to do. We therefore pursue the narrative in the hope of making its meaning perfectly clear and intelligible.

"And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee" (Exo. 4:1).

We should not be warranted in taking this as evidence of Moses' *unbelief*, but rather as a casting about for some further tangible proof whereby the elders of Israel might be convinced that he was divinely instructed and empowered to act as the visible agent of God in the proposed deliverance of the nation. This view of the matter appears from the answer he received:

"And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And He said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

"And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand in thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow.

"And He said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and it was turned again as his other flesh.

"And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

"And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land" (vs. 2-9).

These signs were not only evidence of divine commission, but were *highly typical*, or *allegorical, of other things*. The rod with which he had tended Jethro's sheep was about to be used in the deliverance and shepherding of the flock of Israel, the people and sheep of Jehovah's pasture.

While it therefore speaks of the divine appointment of Moses, *it was doubtless allegorical of the "rod" that should come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and the "Branch" that should grow out of his roots.*

Its becoming a *serpent* would symbolically represent the *sin-nature*, and the *leprous hand* and its cleansing would point to the *condemnation of sin*, and the *cleansing thereof* by the sacrificial blood of Christ, also represented by the turning of the *water* of the river into *blood*.

This was in brief the "mystery of the Gospel," pointing forward to the taking away of the sin of the world by the appointed Lamb of God, as we learn from apostolic testimony.

But this was probably not perceived by Moses at the time. To him it would be only an assurance of his divine appointment, from which his modesty would, even now, have led him to get away if possible; for he said unto the Lord—

"O, my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

"And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

"And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send.

"And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad.

"And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: And I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

"And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs" (vs. 10-17).

How effectually was met every suggestion of the weakness that seems to have possessed Moses! And how forcible is the lesson, which was never forgotten by him, that, *whomsoever God may choose as instruments in His hands, for any work He may require to be done by them, He prepares and fully qualifies them for that work, and co-operates with them.*

There are many illustrations of this: Joseph in Egypt, the divinely-appointed succorer of the people of God's choice; David, the Shepherd-King; and the prophets of Israel; and, we may add also, all those who shall be "heirs of salvation," whom He calls by the gospel to His Kingdom and glory, whose probation is a preparation for the honor, glory, and immortality of that Kingdom; and who, with Christ as their head, shall rule the world in righteousness.

And what shall we say of the evidence of divine prescience contained in the commission itself? Taking, first, the clear presentation to Moses of the result of his intended interview with the elders in the divine message to be deliver to them,

"And they shall hearken to thy voice."

And again, concerning Pharaoh (Exo. 3:19-21)—

"I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out My hand and smite Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall come to pass, that when ye go ye shall not go empty."

Here is foreknowledge, or divine prescience, which is the peculiar characteristic of the Bible. No other book makes any pretension to this power, or, at least, has any ground for such pretension, if

made. The Bible is therefore the only truly divine literary product that the world has ever seen. If men would study it with a view to its merits, they would soon discern that *it contains within itself the evidence of its divinity*, and would learn to appreciate it at its proper value; and the evidence which would convince men of its divinity, in tracing out its fulfilled predictions, would lead to an understanding of, and implicit confidence in, *that which remains to be fulfilled* in the times and manner appointed.

How clearly and beautifully is this feature exemplified by the angel in the preparation of Moses for his divinely appointed mission! Had he not been endowed with the divine attribute of omniscience, how came this representative of the Deity to know, firstly, Moses, whom he called by name at the burning bush (3:4); and afterwards, Aaron, Moses's brother?—

"Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also behold, he cometh to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart" (4:14).

Remember that Moses had been forty years in seclusion, away from his brother, who was his senior in years, and who, no doubt, had lost all sight of Moses, and, perhaps, despaired of ever seeing him again. But mark! the angel said to Moses,

"He (Aaron) cometh to meet thee."

What a strange thing is here presented to poor humanity, which of itself is unable to see but a short distance even where no impediment to vision obtains. But here we have a being whose eye was as much upon Aaron as it was upon Moses, who was before His face; and not only so, but the possessor of power to bring them together without the being so operated upon knowing that he was the subject of such operation. This is one of the most conspicuous lessons of divine providence which it is possible to consider.

Reader, stop and think of it. Reflection upon this wonderful event will open, it may be, your eyes to the marvellous spectacle of an all-ruling Providence which *arranges by angelic supervision in the most accurate manner, without individual perception, events and circumstances in accordance with the will of God*. In this case Moses was to have the pleasure of the companionship and co-operation of his brother Aaron. Oh, what a meeting would this be!

We call to mind that of Jacob with his brother Esau; but in that case Jacob's heart failed him for fear of his brother. Nevertheless, the meeting had been divinely arranged, and was divinely directed; and the result was a loving and affectionate embrace after Esau's anger had been appeased.

In *this* case there was nothing to fear, but everything to make glad. And while thus affording to Moses the indescribable pleasure of restoration to the companionship of his own family connection (he himself being of the family of Levi, which was about to be taken hold of by the Deity for special purposes in connection with the "kingdom of priests" which He was about to establish to Himself), He made this interesting occasion the opportunity of manifesting His choice of the family of Levi and the selection of the High Priest of His Kingdom.

The marvellous manner in which the Deity brings to pass the objects before His mind is beautifully illustrated in this simple narrative, in which—at least, upon the surface of it—it would *appear* that the introduction of Aaron into the proposed operations for the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, was the direct outcome of the backwardness of Moses to accept the responsibility sought to be imposed upon him.

Oh, how wonderful are the ways of God! Shall we not learn a lesson from this palpable evidence of the divine mode of working out His purposes? Shall we, having seen the operation of Providence in this case, *restrict it to this particular event*? Or, shall we not hereby learn the important lesson that—

"Known unto God are **ALL His works** from the beginning."

—and that those who are called to His kingdom and glory "are *HIS workmanship*"; and that, therefore, His children are the *special objects of His care*, and providential development?

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

"HOLY IN ALL MANNER OF CONVERSATION"

By the side of the coffin, the exhortations of the Spirit have great force: yet to be of benefit **they must obtain the mastery over us in the common circumstances of every-day life**, leading us to walk as saints, "holy in all manner of conversation," purified unto Christ a peculiar people, zealous of good works, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance but walking in the light, that we may be the children of the light, thus made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

—**Bro. Roberts.**

We Know That the Law Is Spiritual

"Do we make void the Law? . . . Rather, we establish the Law!"

The Law, says Paul, was "Holy, just and good" (Rom. 7:12). He says it was "ordained unto life" (Rom. 7:10). Like David (Psa. 119:77, 97), he said he "delighted in the Law" (Rom. 7:22). But elsewhere he calls it a "ministration of death" (2 Cor. 3:7), a "ministration of condemnation" (2 Cor. 3:9) and a "yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). He notes this apparent paradox:

"Is the Law sin? . . . Was then that which is good made death unto me?" (Rom. 7:7-13).

Can we blame the Law for sin and death, and the failure of man to attain to the life which was ordained by the Law? In both cases he immediately answers, "God forbid!", or more correctly, "Let it not be!" Do not entertain such a God-dishonoring thought, for the Law was a holy ordinance of God. He says,

"We know the Law is spiritual; but **I am carnal**, sold under sin."

The Law was ordained to life. It was man who failed. The Law had its perfect fulfilment in Christ. It was designed for him, and he for it. But the Law could not give him even a perfectly righteous man without first an atoning death. This arose from a condition previous to the Law which the Law itself was powerless to correct. At the very moment of birth, the Law recognized the condemnation that man was born into, and the penalty already due.

Even for the birth of Jesus, Mary must be unclean 33 days and then offer a sin offering—"A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." Those turtledoves had no efficacy except in the sacrifice they foreshadowed. "The Law made nothing perfect," but it *signified the way by which perfection must come*.

It may be said that even Christ himself came under the curse of the Law, for "Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree" (Gal. 3:13). This is true, and is one of the marvellous details of the working out of God's wonderfully intricate plan, but here again *it was sin, and not the Law, that was to blame*. This particular ordinance of the Law was perfectly just. But sin banded together and hanged an innocent man. The Law did not contemplate the hanging of the innocent. Only sin could do that.

And here is one of the places where we can legitimately make a distinction between the spirit and the letter. The obvious spirit and intention of the Law was, "Cursed is everyone that is *deservedly* hanged on a tree." Christ personally in character was free from the slightest shadow of a stigma of this curse in its true intention.

Did he then just come under the letter and not the spirit of the curse, and forfeit the life to which the Law was ordained by an unjust legal technicality? This would not be a fitting ingredient in God's great and glorious plan. His death was to declare the *righteousness* of God, and this could not be done by merely fulfilling the *letter* in violation of the *spirit*. God's arrangements are not technical and mechanical, but living and in harmony with truth.

As a strong, sinless, voluntary representative and covering for his weak but humble and repentant brethren, Christ's sacrifice was beautiful and just. He became a curse for us, not merely when the technicality of the breaking of the Law was fulfilled in the actual crucifixion but when he freely presented himself in obedience to the Father's will as the Redeemer on whom the history and destiny of the race was centered.

"Our old man is crucified with him" (Rom. 6:6).

There was no technicality about the curse on this old man. The crucifixion on the cross was the symbol and climax of a life-long victory in the crucifixion of the flesh. That flesh came under the just condemnation of the Law, and hung upon the tree in perfect justice.

These thoughts arise from a consideration of Deut 22. With David we are led to exclaim, "*Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law!*" (Psa. 119:18).

Verse 1: "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother."

The meaning of "brother" here has the same broad, liberal intent that Christ placed on the word "neighbor," for in Exo. 23:4, the same command is worded—

"If thou meet thine **enemy's** ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it to him again. If thou see the ass of **him that hateth thee** lying under his burden, and wouldest forebear to help him, thou shalt surely help him."

Could a law of this character be found in force anywhere in the world today? What of the so-called Christian nations who seek to pervert the Old Testament into a justification of their ungodly wars? God's people went to war at *God's* command for purposes that *God* decided, and at *God's* command they be refrained. When God commanded Zedekiah and the children of Israel to submit to the domination of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, they brought God's anger and punishment upon themselves by a misguided resistance. They felt that, in the wars that God had previously sanctioned, they had ample justification and precedent, *but they did not grasp the underlying principles*. They only had half the picture, and they destroyed themselves in misguided zeal.

It is the principles behind the commands that we must grasp and apply. The Law was holy, just and good. Christ came, not to destroy it, but to fulfil it in all its beauty. "Do we then make void the Law?" asks Paul (Rom 3:31). Again that same emphatic, "God forbid—Let it not be so!" "Rather, we *establish* the Law." And he explains that God, through Christ—

"Condemned sin in the flesh: **that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us**"
(Rom 8:3-4).

The principle in the first command in Deut. 22 is identical with the principle of Jesus' beautiful words on the Mount,

"Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you."

This is the new-old commandment that Jesus brought—new in that it has so rarely been used or understood, old in that they had had it from the beginning.

V.5: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on woman's garments; for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God."

This word "abomination" is a very strong term. It denotes utter abhorrence. The principle here is crystal-clear. Each sex has its proper place in the all-wise arrangements of God, and each in its place is beautiful and fitting and a glory to God, but for either to attempt to fill the position that God has designated for the other is intensely displeasing to Him. The world, in a misguided zeal for what it terms equality, uses all its powers to destroy the individuality and distinction and complementary harmony that God has created in making man and woman. "*In all its works, the world knows not God.*"

V. 8: "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house."

Responsibility. "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" The principle here is that we are responsible for others to the extent that our actions do or could affect them. We think of Jesus' solemn words:

"Whoso shall offend—or cause to offend—one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Mt. 18:6).

And Paul's inspired commentary upon this,

"If meat make my brother to offend, **I will eat no flesh while the world standeth**"
(I Cor. 8:13).

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Rom. 14:21).

We cannot run away from this heavy responsibility (Rom. 14:7):

"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

Every action, *and every failure to act when action is called for*, will have its effect upon others which we must answer for. It is easier to build a house without a parapet around the roof. It has certain advantages. We may feel quite safe ourselves, but God says that *in whatever we build the protecting wall must be there for the sake of others who may not be as surefooted or as quick to perceive the dividing line as we.*

V. 9: "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seed."

Here again the principle is unmistakable—

"Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seed, **lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be DEFILED.**"

"The seed is the Word of God," said Jesus. "If any man preach any other Gospel, let him be *accursed.*" Hard words indeed, but they are not ours; they are the necessary words of warning from God. In all the world, there is no hope of life except in the true seed. Whoever contributes in the slightest way to the contamination of that seed is a *murderer*, however exalted his intentions may be. This is a matter of life and death. *Very, very few things in this world really matter or are important, but here is one that is vital.*

Whoever we cannot conscientiously welcome to the table of the Lord has another Gospel. We dare not encourage them, nor bid them Godspeed. It is neither kindness to them nor ourselves, nor faithfulness to God, to allow the seriousness of the issue to be lost in a haze of ill-advised fraternization. We are stewards and custodians of something far more important than ourselves. Great plainness of speech is called for, although at the same time great kindness and forbearance.

It is always easy to condemn and destroy, but to build takes time and work. Those who by nature are firm have a natural tendency to be harsh and bitter: those who by nature are soft have a tendency to be weak and compromising. Whatever comes naturally to us must be distrusted, for in our flesh dwells no good thing. There are no natural virtues. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit. *To pride ourselves on our natural reactions—whatever they are—is to glory in our shame.* We are only safe when we are consciously restraining nature and following the Spirit's expressed instructions contrary to nature.

V. 10, "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together."

"Doth God take care for oxen? or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written" (1 Cor. 9:9).

An ox and an ass. Clean and unclean, a true believer and one with another Gospel. Can they plow together? Can they have joint activities? Can they join hands in anything and expect God's favor and blessing? What saith the Scripture?

V. 11, "Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together."

A variation of the same basic principle, with certain different aspects. What could possibly be wrong with a mixture of weaving materials? God is simply *driving home the same old lesson*—purity, separation, holiness—over and over again, even to the point of not mixing in their clothing—a mixed covering—a mixed protection—a mixed dependence—*wool* and *linen*: the natural, fleshly, animal covering, or the Spirit's white garment.

If God is our covering, it must be God alone. We must choose, and be faithful to that choice. *"I would that ye were hot or cold!"* Be all the way inside or all the way outside. To stand in the doorway discourages those that are inside and hinders those that are outside. It is belittling to God's Holy Truth, and a mockery of God. How often that lesson is repeated and still it is so hard to learn!

—G.V.G.

Signs of the Times

"The kings of the whole world . . . to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. . . and he gathered them together to a place called Armageddon"—Rev. 16.

While the Suez situation commands the spotlight at present in the Middle East trouble and strife, behind the scenes there looms many complications which have a direct bearing on the Egyptian move to take over the Canal. Chief among these is the effect it might have on the production and transportation of oil.

Increase of knowledge during the past 75 years, especially the vast increase in the use of fuel-burning machinery, has brought into world prominence a commodity which was considered of little importance—and to many peoples unknown—a century ago. That commodity is OIL.

To such an extent has crude oil and its various products (chief of which is gasoline) become a necessity in turning the wheels of industry and commerce, that a serious shortage of this "black gold" would completely stagnate the industry, transportation and commerce of any nation. Moreover, any nation deprived of a plentiful supply of oil could not possibly conduct large-scale military operations. Its armies would be stalled, its airplanes grounded, its navy seriously crippled. Such forces, deprived

of oil, would be rendered impotent and defenceless in the face of a foe plentifully supplied with this precious fuel.

All this is common knowledge, and fully realized by all informed people, and these facts concerning oil constitute the main reason for the present world-wide anxiety about the Mid-Eastern situation. There are many other issues which are of deep concern to the various peoples of this area. Israel has her particular problems in trying to found a stable economy in the face of bitter Arab opposition. The Arabs on the other hand fear Jewish expansion. Egypt has her problems in trying to rise to power and prosperity from a state of political, economic and social chaos. In like manner do the other Arab states have their problems in trying to maintain their unstable governments in the face of the unrest and insecurity which exists among these poverty-stricken and restless peoples.

But to the nations of the world at large, concerned with the affairs of Jews and Arabs only as their own interests are affected, OIL is the greatest issue, and the minor problems appear great only as they affect the subject of oil, for, whoever controls the oil, controls the Middle East, and vice versa.

While Egyptian control of the Suez Canal could seriously cripple the commerce of Britain and all European countries, the fact that most of the oil supplies of Britain and Europe presently must come through the Canal means that Egypt would have full control over this flow of oil, and could turn this control to her own advantage whenever she chose to do so. It would be as if she had a noose around the neck of all the nations using the Canal, which she could loosen or tighten at her own pleasure. Egypt forbids Israel's use of the Canal, although it is contrary to international agreement.

True, there are already plans for by-passing the Canal with pipelines, or the building of huge tankers to transport oil around Africa; even the building of another canal is suggested. But this means time and huge expense as well as the possibility of dangerous repercussions. For, if the Western nations should boycott the Suez canal, there is the probability of Russia joining with Egypt in operating it in competition with the Western powers, which would be a long step toward Russian penetration of the area. If pipelines are constructed to carry the oil, there is danger of these being sabotaged, leading to military operations.

Amidst the complications and uncertainties of the situation, there arises the fear among the Western powers that they may not only lose control of oil shipments, but the fear of **losing the oil altogether**. For, if Egypt can seize full control of the Canal and get away with it, her prestige in the Arab world would ascend to great heights, and it is quite possible, for the Arabs, following her leadership and example, especially **with Russian aid**, to get complete control of oil production. One news commentator puts it this way: "Colonel Nassar has already cast a shadow over the West's vital oil interests."

Though Russia has no present need herself for Mid-East oil, having plenty of her own, there are several reasons why she is vitally interested: first and foremost, to **keep the Western powers from getting it**; second, to profit in the production of the oil; and third, to hold a reserve supply, if and when world supplies of oil become scarce.

The reason for all this anxiety about oil is readily seen when the full facts concerning world oil reserves are known. When it is realized that large-scale oil production has been carried on for little more than 50 years, and that world consumption is growing by leaps and bounds, another symptom of "hearts failing for fear" is developing. Here are the facts, as given by oil experts. The known oil reserves on this planet approximate 190 billion barrels. Of this oil, still underground, **67% is in the area known as the Middle-East**. The Western hemisphere, including all U. S. reserves, has 25%, and all the rest of the world 8% of all known oil reserves. At the present rate of production and consumption, the **Middle-East oil would last 100 years**; that of the U. S. and other countries would last only about 12 or 15 years. Of course, there is the possibility of discovering other oil supplies, or finding other kinds of fuel, to take the place of oil, but this is a gamble which the powers of the world

cannot afford to make in these troublous times when a shortage of fuel might make the difference between victory and total destruction.

But what, one might ask, has this to do with the Signs of the Times concerning the return of the Lord Jesus to judge the world? Just this: **it centers world interest on these countries having such a prominent place in the events to occur in the final crisis of the time of the end.** It creates rivalries among the great powers, who would otherwise be little interested in Palestine and her Arabian enemies. It may conceivably be the chief cause for the final war between the nations and the descent of the Gogian host upon these countries.

It is strange, too, that in these lands which for so many centuries were almost forgotten and were wholly undesired by the greater portion of humanity; where vast stretches of worthless, trackless desert lay for ages beneath the scorching sun; a land inhabited chiefly by shiftless, unprogressive nomads;—yes, indeed, it is strange that the Creator of the ends of the earth had, all these ages, preserved beneath these desert sands a commodity which would, in God's own good time, become the most desirable of all commodities, wealth almost beyond computation, and made so desirable, so essential, that great and powerful nations would fight to the death for its possession!

We are told that "He gathered them into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." And it appears probable that OIL may be one of the chief attractions in gathering the nations to this particular place at the time appointed of God.

* * *

It is interesting to us especially to note the attitude of Israel toward the Suez affair and the policies of the Western powers in general. According to an article by Yisrael Beer of Jerusalem, writing in an Israel publication, the Jews feel that Israel has been made a scapegoat by Britain and the other Western powers in an effort to appease Egypt and the Arabs.

He says that Britain's loss of prestige in the Middle East and the general weakening of the Empire is directly traceable to her betrayal of the Jews and to the Western policy of trying to get a foothold in the Middle East "by intrigue, corruption and bribery." In this writer's opinion, the callous attitude of the U. S. and other powers in winking at and even justifying the shipment of arms to Egypt and the Arab nations, while denying arms to Israel, and allowing Egypt to violate Israel's shipping rights in the Suez canal, has had much to do with encouraging the aggressiveness of Egypt and the Arab states, culminating in Egypt's seizure of the Canal. He suggests as a remedy for the West's dilemma that,

"The aggressive and expansionist tendencies of the Egyptian dictatorship will be most effectively restrained by strengthening the only real counter-balance of these tendencies in the Middle East—ISRAEL—the only democratic state in the area."

Current developments will undoubtedly bring Israel's position into greater world prominence—an alien island in the midst of a stirring and increasingly turbulent Arab "Empire."

* * *

It is worthy of note that both Democratic and Republican political platforms contain a clause favorable to Israel, but the Democrats go further than their opponents in definitely favoring shipment of arms to Israel—

"The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

* * *

One of the strangest rivalries ever known is now being conducted by the U. S. and Russia. It is **to see which one can give the most to the weak**, needy nations whose friendship and support they crave. The helping hand of Russia now appears to have grown nearly as large as that of prodigal Uncle

Sam. This is a new and alarming index of the spectacular growth of Soviet power. As men's hearts fail from fear of what might be coming on the earth, no nation is too small or too weak to make them undesirable as allies.

It is a gigantic struggle for the allegiance of the world, and the trend more and more favors Russia—

"He gathereth unto him all nations" (Hab. 2:5).

—O.B.

Ecclesial News

LETHBRIDGE, Alta., Can.—633 7th St.—Memorial 11 a.m.; Sunday School 12:30 p.m.; Lecture 7:30 p.m.; Bible Class Wednesday 8 p.m.

To the Brethren and Sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, scattered abroad and at home: Loving Greetings in the one Hope.

We have had the great pleasure once again to see one more pass through the waters of baptism. On July 15th, RALPH NIVEN HOBKIRK was immersed after giving a very good confession of the things of the Kingdom of God and those things concerning the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our new brother severed his connection with the open house fellowship meeting in Calgary, Alberta, about two years ago, and has been a member of our Senior Sunday School class. He told us that he did not know the Truth as taught by us when he was first immersed, and asked for re-immersion. May our Heavenly Father bless and keep him on his new walk towards the coming Kingdom of God and may he be welcomed therein.

We held our Annual Sunday School gathering on July 13 at the Government Experimental Farm, and all truly enjoyed it.

The signs of our times as they are developing in and around the Land of Promise tell us in no uncertain manner that our Lord and Master will soon be here. Let us again, brethren and sisters, lift up our heads for our redemption draweth nigh. —bro. Wm. Blacker

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