

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.

For the present, please send all Berean communications to:
Bro. G. V. Growcott, 13308 Denver Circle, Sterling Heights, Mich. 48077, U.S.A.
 Australia subs. may go to bro. R. Hodges, 2 Emily St., Esperance 6450, W. Aust.

Please send all personal correspondence for bro. Gibson to:
Bro. G. A. Gibson, 33 Bellairs Road, Kardinya, Western Australia 6163

"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.

CONTENTS

100 YEARS AGO: Russia Triumphant, War near End; Finger Posts; Reunion Appeal; Hymn Book; Bro. Roberts' Labours.....	398
THE TRANSFORMING TREASURES OF THE WORD: The Daily Readings for the Last Week of the Year	399
A PURE OFFERING (Bro. Thomas): Will There Be Sacrifices in the Age to Come?	404
HOLINESS BECOMETH THINE HOUSE (Bro. Roberts): An Urgent Appeal to Give All to God While It Is Yet Day	413
November Answers	418
The Poor of This World (J.T.)	418
I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (John 8)	419
THERE AM I IN THE MIDST: True Fellowship in the Truth	423
CURRENT WORLD EVENTS FULFILLING PROPHECY: Sadat in Israel; Somalia Boots out the Russians; Another Soviet Grain Sting; Green Light for Russia in Africa	426
1978 Subscriptions	432
Bible Questions: Occupations	432

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CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

THE WAR was going disastrously for the Turks, tho they were still protesting stoutly that they would fight till the last Russian was driven from their land. The European territories they were trying to hold were non-Turkish, & were welcoming the invader as a liberator. In Asia, the fortress of Kars had been taken, & Russia had driven 130 miles to Erzeroum. Another huge, well-entrenched Turk force near Erzeroum had been cleverly lured from its fortifications, & completely destroyed, & the fortification & all the army's supplies taken. In Europe, Plevna was now surrounded & cut off, & its fall, with another huge Turk army, was expected momentarily.

Britain was becoming increasingly uneasy about how far & how fast Russia would advance. Talk of taking over Egypt & Syria to protect the Empire lifeline was increasing; as was talk of conscription, something entirely new for Britain. Bro. Roberts says—

"Brethren of Christ cannot bear arms. That is a settled conviction with all who have apprehended the first principles of the oracles of God. Military service may become compulsory: then we shall have to face the consequences of refusal. It may be that some such trial of obedience may come to the brethren before the hour of deliverance. Let us be ready. Life & liberty are not worth having when they can only be preserved at the price of transgression against the law of Christ. In such a case truly, he that saveth his life shall lose it."

* * *

THE first 4 of the 'Bible Fingerposts' were announced, with 4 more in the printer's hands. This was the beginning of this well-known work that has served so well & long.

* * *

THERE was an appeal for Reunion from the Renunciationists, on the basis of forgetting the past & 'letting bygones be bygones' Bro. Roberts replies—

"To 'let bygones be bygones' is a reasonable proposal when the 'bygones' are of such a nature as to be sorrowed for & repudiated. But those to whom a return is proposed have no 'bygones' to repent of so far as their course in this matter is concerned. They acted with a good conscience before God, with sorrow that they were compelled to so act, but seeing no alternative. They would so act again if necessity calls for it. Their position now is the position they occupied then. If the appealers desire to take part in this position, they will be gladly welcomed.

"But let there be no misunderstanding. There can be no union without unity. No proposal of union can be accepted without a distinct repudiation of the heresy that has sown division."

The Renunciation error was the same basic error concerning the nature & sacrifice of Christ that keeps cropping up & is still extant, & which is at the root of all the objections to the doctrinal truths so clearly and necessarily set forth in Clauses 5 & 12 of the BASF, concerning the defiling nature of the sentence upon Adam, & the condemnation of sin in the flesh. These have been bones of contention by the erring since apostolic days. Any who feel a need to explain away these truths in the BASF do not comprehend the Truth.

Those who have pursued a wrong course & have espoused or condoned error have a solemn responsibility to the Truth to frankly & openly repudiate & condemn the error, not just ignore the past. Surely all with a love for the Truth would be happy & eager to do this, on coming to a realization of the erroneous course. Only pride could desire otherwise.

* * *

BRO. Roberts has an article on the Hymn Book with music (which had just recently appeared), & on singing in general. With the Bible Companion, this has been one of bro. Roberts' most useful & influential works. It breathes the pure, simple spirit of the Truth as opposed to orthodoxy much more robustly than later more worldly & grandiose efforts.

Singing is an essential part of worship. Actually, the spirit of song should permeate every aspect & activity of the Truth & of our lives. Bro. Roberts says—

"The mind is strengthened & consoled in the things of the Spirit in the act of singing, properly engaged in. It is enabled to see the glories of the Truth more distinctly than at other times. . . It is a balm from heaven in the midst of troubles, soothing & solacing with the spiritual comforts associated with the harmonious singing of the Lord's songs, though in a strange land . . .

"The Truth is more or less latent in the consciousness when the mind is quiescent. The various exercises appointed for us in the apostolic ordinances tend to develop it as a visible & operative thing. And among these exercises, none are more effective than the singing of 'psalms & hymns & spiritual songs'.

"What little taste we have of the sweets of good singing should incite us to further exertion. It's a question of patient work, like every other good attainment. The work, to be usefully done, requires the leadership of a kind, patient, competent brother who knows how to subordinate the technicalities of song to the spirit of the high calling. There is at least one brother in most ecclesias who understands music & possesses the qualifications for leadership, if

he would but develop them by exercise. And where there is not one, there are those who could qualify themselves by study, if they could but realize that in helping the brethren to sing well, they would be helping them in one department of the good work, for the lack of which the cause of edification & comfort suffers. . .

"In a right state of civilization, all the faculties of man's being would be developed: the musical as much as the literary & mechanical, with the spiritual shining over all. This is what will be in the Age to Come.

"The Word not only prescribes reading, prayer and well-doing, but the singing of psalms & hymns & spiritual songs. And it tells us to do 'with our might' whatsoever our hands find to do: particularly things connected with the service of our Father, Who requires 'the best.' God help His people to redeem the evil days of their darkness by ability to use every means of strength & comfort He has given."

* * *

REPORTING a lecturing visit by bro. Roberts, one recording brother says—

"Unfortunately, bro. Roberts was compelled to bring his work with him, so that we had not the time with him we anticipated. I had made some notes of questions to ask & points to talk on, but had to endure the disappointment."

To which bro. Roberts appends a note—

"A disappointment entirely mutual, & due to 2 things which cannot at present be got rid of: much head work to do, & not enough physical strength to do it without intervals of walking solitude in the open air. All impediments to the service will disappear when the Lord returns to beautify the meek with salvation, and invest them with the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Bro. Roberts pushed himself to the absolute limit in the service of the Truth, under physical handicaps, & with little regard for his health. This is what God expects & requires. It is a matter of faith, & relative values. If we are not doing this—which many men of the world do for mere temporal ends—let us ask ourselves honestly just how much we really value the Pearl of Great Price: endless, joyful, divine life in the sweet communion of glorified companions manifesting the perfect beauty of holiness of mind & character, all under the loving Headship of Christ. We are apt to think of bro. Roberts' tremendous accomplishments as a matter of ability, & therefore excuse ourselves. Rather it was a matter of great, lifelong effort & intense mental concentration (the hardest kind of work) motivated by love.

The Transforming Treasures of the Word

"I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified"—Acts 20:32

THE DAILY READINGS FOR THE LAST WEEK OF THE YEAR

WHAT wonderful readings we have had for the past week!—the last week of the year, as we conclude our annual Daily Reading pattern once again with renewed thanksgiving for the Word of Life. What a fountain of wisdom and holiness! What a source of comfort and edification! These are the things that bind us together, and help us to hold fast to our faith.

And so, as we assemble together to remember Christ by partaking of the Bread and Wine, we meditate upon the Word, and extract from it cheer, comfort, wisdom, understanding and strength. We are encouraged; our hope is renewed; our faith is strengthened; our love is stimulated; and our minds are refreshed as we drink of the Living Water of God's Truth.

Are we fully alive to our privileged position in Christ, and its consequent very high responsibilities and obligations? When we look abroad in the world, and behold sin, trouble, unrest, and violence on every hand, do we stop and think, and glorify God continually with overflowing hearts? One of the greatest dangers, and weaknesses of mortal flesh, is to come to take marvels and blessings for granted.

Let us then constantly remind ourselves that previous to our baptism into Christ, we were 'strangers from the Edenic, Noahic, Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants of Promise.' We had no hope with any sound foundation, and we were God-less in the world—Eph.2: 12—a mere part of the general, perishing, animal constitution.

If we do this, we will truly appreciate the great change that has come into our lives, and we will strain every effort, in love, to be more and more worthy of it. Here we are assembled in this humble manner, representative of the poor of this world, yet rich in faith, watching and waiting, hoping and praying, for the consummation of God's purpose in the earth. And let us remember we *are* poor. We possess nothing. All that comes to our hand is God's, to be used for His purposes in faithful stewardship, 'as those that must give account.'

Through the obedience of the Gospel, we have become Abraham's children, and 'heirs according to the Promises.' In Christ, we are now—

"No more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the Household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief Cornerstone" (Eph. 2:19).

Having complied with the initiatory requirements of the Gospel, let us draw near, this morning, with a true heart in full assurance of faith, that we may be comforted, strengthened and admonished through the reading of, and meditation on, God's Word. Let us look at some of the golden threads as they appear in our readings for the past week.

First, we have been with that noble example of patience, Job, and we have rejoiced again in the gracious 'end of the Lord,' in love and mercy, after Job had been sorely 'tried as gold.' This is of great comfort to us in our trials, many of which—like Job—we cannot understand at the time. But wisdom will accept all without wavering, 'tho He slay me.' In many ways, Job was a type of Christ. We thus read—

"He knoweth the way that I take. When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held His steps; His Way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips: I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food"(23:10).

These prophetic words are indeed, in their fulness, far more applicable to Christ than to Job, though Job was a faithful type of righteous and patient suffering. We look at Jesus during his temptation in the wilderness (and though so simply worded, and we may read it with deceptive calmness, yet we know there was involved in this strange event a testing to the uttermost of human endurance and steadfastness). He was hungry, but repulsed his tempter, saying—

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt.4:4).

And again, at the well of Samaria, he told his disciples (John 4:34)—

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

In ch. 28, that beautiful chapter of man's dauntless search for the hidden treasures of the earth, Job speaks of the one real and true treasure to be sought to the exclusion of all else (v. 20)—

"Whence cometh wisdom? And where is the place of understanding?"

And he answers—

"Behold, the FEAR OF THE LORD, *that* is wisdom; and to DEPART FROM EVIL is understanding (v.28).

Job and his 3 friends cease to speak. In ch. 32, the younger Elihu, full of zeal for God's honour, breaks his impatient silence. He speaks with fervent vehemence of the incomparable greatness of God, and of the helpless, dependent, littleness of man, who should never for a moment dare to question his Creator, but should in humble, thankful love seek for Him and serve Him (34:14-15)—

"If He set His heart on man, if He gather unto Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust."

This expresses one of the most important fundamentals of the Truth—one we find oft repeated throughout Scripture, and one which man must learn at the threshold of his approach to God—one which destroys in its entirety the Egyptian doctrine of the immortality of the soul. It is 'man'—proud man himself—that 'turns again unto dust.'

* * *

We turn now to the prophecy of Zechariah, to have a brief look at some of the golden threads there. Zechariah was a colleague of the prophet Haggai. They were both contemporary with Zerubbabel and the return from Babylon under the decree of Cyrus, and prophesied in the 2nd year of Darius (Hystaspis), about 520 BC, at the time of the rebuilding of the Temple. Their message was to encourage this work, which had been stopped. Ezra speaks of them in 5: 1—

"Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the Name of the God of Israel."

Zechariah's book is one of great riches, and one of the most interesting in Scripture. While his immediate mission related to the restoration under Zerubbabel (an outstanding type of Christ), it by no means ceases there, but deals extensively with the greater and final return under the greater Zerubbabel. His prophecy reaches forward into the Kingdom of God, and gives us some very vivid details of the final conflict that we get nowhere else. Its highlights are—

Ch. 1: The man on the red horse among the myrtle trees, reporting that all the earth was at rest. .the 4 Horns (Beast-kingdoms of the Gentiles) that oppress Israel, and the 4 Carpenters (the Cherubim host) that destroy them.

Ch. 2: The choosing again and rebuilding of Jerusalem in peace and prosperity as God's dwelling place when 'many nations' are 'joined to the Lord.'

Ch. 3: The rebuking of the satan, and the replacing of the filthy garments of the High Priest Joshua with priestly-royal apparel... God's Servant THE BRANCH . . . and the removal of the iniquity of the land 'in one day.'

Ch. 4: The golden ecclesial post-resurrectional Candlestick and 'Sons of Oil' that illumine the rejuvenated earth . . . & the great Babylonian mountain destroyed by the antitypical Zerubbabel 'not by power or might' but by God's Spirit.

Ch. 5: The flying roll of the curse on iniquity... & the unclean wickedness-ephah of apostasy transferred from Jerusalem to spiritual Babylon—the anti-apostolic Judaisers become the Man of Sin and Name of Blasphemy at Rome.

Ch. 6: The 4 Cherubim-chariots with their Israel war-horses issuing forth unto all the earth from between the 2 great latter-day mountains of fleshly brass: the Kings of North & South . . .THE BRANCH again, as a Priest upon his royal throne . . . The House of Prayer for all nations built.

Ch. 7: A rebuke & an exhortation to the people of the prophet's own day.

Ch. 8: Jerusalem a city of holiness & truth, joyfully & peacefully teeming with aged and young . . . Israel at last the true People of God, a blessing to all the world . . . honoured and acknowledged by all nations.

Ch. 9: "*Rejoice, O daughter of Zion... Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, & having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass . . .*

"He shall speak peace unto the nations, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea: from the River even to the ends of the earth . . .

"Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope . . .

"How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!"

Ch. 10: Judah God's goodly horse in the battle, treading down all their enemies because God is with them (Emmanuel) . . . Assyria and Egypt humbled . . . Israel strong in the Lord, and walking in His Name.

Ch. 11: The breaking of the 2 staves, Beauty & Bands . . . the cutting off of the 3 shepherds . . . the goodly price of 30 pieces of silver, cast to the potter . . . the idol shepherd destroyed. These are the mysteries of the 2 covenants culminating in the cutting off of the Messiah & end of the Mosaic system.

Ch. 12: Jerusalem the 'burdensome stone': all nations gathered against it . . . the Lord to its deliverance . . . the attacking nations destroyed . . .

"And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced . . . "

. . . the great national mourning in Israel.

Ch. 13: The cleansing of the land, & destroying of all its false prophets . . .

"What are these wounds in thine hands?"

Two-thirds of the nation cut off in the terrible Time of Trouble . . . the remainder, purified, become the People of God.

Ch. 14: Again, the latter-day picture of all nations against Jerusalem . . . the great earthquake, & rending of Mt. Olivet . . . the plague that destroys the Gogian hosts . . . all nations go yearly to Jerusalem to worship.

And finally, in all the earth: HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

* * *

Let us now look into the Apocalypse to see some of its wonders. Ch. 9 covers the period of the 5th & 6th Trumpets. This represents the time occupied by the careers of the Arab & Turkish Empires from the time of Mohammed about 620 AD to the fall of Constantinople and end of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453.

Ch. 10 is the glorious Rainbow Angel: another symbol of the 4 Carpenters and the 4 Cherubim Chariots. In vs. 1-7 John sees a wonderful vision: a mighty angel invested with a cloud, a rainbow encircling his head & his face shining like the sun; his feet were like pillars of fire. As he held a little scroll in one hand, he placed one foot on the sea and the other on the land. Then he cried aloud: a great cry like the roar of a lion. This was quickly followed by 7 mighty peals of thunder, in which John heard intelligent voices.

John thought that the things declared by these voices were part of what he was to record, and he was about to write; but was forbidden.

The great angel then lifted his hand toward heaven, and swore by Him Who lives for the ages of the ages that there should be no more delay, but when the 7th Angel begins to sound, the secret of God should be completed, as He had announced the Glad Tidings to His servants the prophets.

What does this vision signify? Bro. Thomas has explained it beautifully. The angel is a symbol, and stands for a class sent. 'Clothed with a cloud' is also a symbol, and stands for a multitude: the Multitudinous Christ: the Host of the Redeemed surrounding their Head. This class exercises conquering power, both on water and land—the whole world—for the angel places one foot on the sea and the other on the earth. The fiery feet represent a destructive, treading-down power; while the Rainbow speaks to us of the Everlasting Covenant, and of glorious eternal sunshine after the storm of earth-judgment.

The voice resembling the fearful roar of a lion shows that this class will command world attention, and cannot be ignored. It is a voice of great authority and power, for it lets loose 7 thunders, a symbol of war. It is not a mortal community, for the thunders reveal the future, and the face shines with the glory of the sun. The coming down of the angel from heaven signifies that this class is of divine origin.

Who then are the people represented by this angel? What class is it that appears upon the scene with mighty power when the Euphratean Turkish power is dried up?—who come with authority to announce that the times of the Gentiles are at an end, and that the time has arrived when God's purpose with the earth is to be consummated?

There is but one answer. Jesus comes to be glorified in his cloud of saints, and admired in all them that believe—2 Thess. 1: 10, as he promised:

"He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, & he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26).

This is the time foretold by Daniel (7:22-27)—

"The Ancient of Days came, & judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, & the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom... *under* the whole heaven."

It will be remembered that the Scroll mentioned in Rev. 5 was *sealed*: but this scroll in ch.10 is open. Now, a sealed scroll obviously signifies something hidden, or not revealed. But the open scroll signifies that the time had come when God's purpose was no longer concealed, and the 'covering cast over all people and veil spread over the nations' —Isa. 25:7 was to be lifted, so that the people of the earth would no longer be victims of darkness and superstition.

The last 4 vs. deal with the eating of the scroll by John. This, of course, is also symbolic. To eat a book is to receive and digest the knowledge of its contents by reading; also to become assimilated to, and part of, the events recorded. This transaction is very interesting and instructive. John enjoyed the act of eating; it was sweet as honey. He found himself fully in harmony with the message. But as soon as he had eaten it, his belly became bitter. Tho sweet to the taste, and productive of inner peace and harmony with God, the carrying out of the message and fulfilment of the purpose involves many things that are not sweet. The Rainbow Angel's mission was primarily a mission of war, as shown by the thunderings. But when it is all over, the end will be Perfect Peace.

Ezekiel had a similar experience—Ezek. 3: 3; 2: 10. And do we not all experience something similar? We hear and believe the Gospel, and the Word of Truth fills us with sweetness and peace. But in time we realize & experience many things that are bitter in connection with carrying out the Gospel message, within ourselves and in relation to others.

We become the subjects of bitterness, when we look abroad and see how sadly the world lies in wickedness—hopeless, tragic wickedness and sorrow. We try to tell our friends of the Divine remedy and redemption from it all, but they reject it. They prefer the empty, tinselly ways of the world that lead to death.

During the past week this has been brought home so forcibly to us. All around us we have seen the shallowly 'merry' feast of Christ-Mass, thinking that they are honouring the birth of Christ. But if we look into it, and examine all its origins, and compare it with Scripture, we are confronted with the well-established fact that everything connected with Christ-Mass is of pagan origin, and came into 'Christianity' with the pagan corruptions of the early centuries. It is a synthesis & combination of the idolatries of Egypt, Babylon, Rome, Scandinavia and ancient Druid Britain. We find this is frankly admitted—yea, revelled in—by its more knowledgeable devotees. We find the early Christians warning and exhorting one another about succumbing to the introduction of these heathen festivities and customs.

The things concerning this festive season are extremely pleasing to the flesh; but that is not so with the things pertaining to the New Life in Christ. It is an upward process of education and training. A taste for spiritual things has to be cultivated, and daily attention given to it by reading and meditating on God's Word. It becomes to us increasingly beautiful and appealing, but this does not come naturally, for the flesh pulls ever downward.

We are surrounded on every hand by the things of the world, made as enticing and attractive as fleshly ingenuity can contrive. These things appeal to the 3-fold form of temptation—

The LUST OF THE EYE, the LUST OF THE FLESH, & the PRIDE OF LIFE.

These things appeal to our flesh, as well as to the people of the world; but we, by the light of the Word, are conscious of it, and of its dangers; and that is why we exhort one another to hold fast to the Truth, so we will not be moved away from the Hope of the Gospel.

Let us, then, strive with all our might to hold fast, and to wisely discern the fleshly deceptions and pitfalls, and not be overcome by our various forms of trial and temptation; but rather that we *overcome the world*, as our Elder Brother did—John 16:33.

For God has promised wonderful things *to those that overcome*. Overcome what? Overcome the flesh; overcome themselves, their own natural tendencies and desires that are contrary to the will of God & the life of complete service to Him. We read of these promises in the 21st & 22nd chapters. Here they are:

"To him that overcometh . . .

"... I will give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God;

"... he shall not be hurt of the second death;

"... I will give to eat of the Hidden Manna;

"... to him will I give power over the nations;

"... the same shall be clothed in white raiment;

"... I will make him a pillar in the Temple of my God;

"... I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the ecclesias."

—G.A.G.

A Pure Offering

WILL THERE BE SACRIFICES IN THE AGE TO COME?

"Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar, for Mine House shall be called a House of Prayer for all people"—Isaiah 56:7

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

WILL burnt offerings and sacrifices be offered in the Age to Come? A reader asks this, and calls attention to the following scriptures—

Heb. 10:6—"In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure!"

Eph. 2:15—"Christ abolished in his flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances."

Col. 2:14—"Christ blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and nailed them to the cross."

The answer to this question must be sought for in the testimony of God. He only can tell, and I am gratified in being able to inform our correspondent that He has graciously condescended to do so. He instructs us in His Word that the sacrificial offering of beasts *shall* be a part of religious worship in the Age to Come. Of this there can be no doubt with those who believe the prophets.

But whether we can reconcile the restoration of sacrifice with the sayings of Paul without being led to the denial of either, or to the affirmation that a contradiction exists, is a question to be settled, not by the opinions of the learned, but by reason enlightened by the handwriting of God.

The first witness to be summoned in the case is Malachi. He testifies that a time shall come when (1:11)—

"From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, My Name (saith Yahweh* of armies) shall be great among the nations. And in every place incense shall be offered to My Name, and a pure offering, for My Name shall be great among the nations, saith the I-shall-be of armies."

* ('Yahweh' used throughout for 'Jehovah,' according to bro. Thomas' later usage.)

This is evidently in the future, because it has never obtained in the past. Now, when the time for the offering of this incense and pure offering in everyplace shall have arrived, a purified priesthood will have been prepared to offer it among the nations, for the same witness testifies, saying (3:1-4)—

"The Messenger of the Covenant... shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that *they* may offer to Yahweh an offering in righteousness.

"Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Yahweh, *as in the days of old*, and as in former years."

The next witness we shall call up is Isaiah. He testifies that, at the time when 'the Lord God gathereth the outcasts of Israel —

"The sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord to serve Him, and to love the Name of the Lord, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My Covenant—

"Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My House of Prayer. *Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices* shall be accepted on Mine altar, for Mine House shall be called an House of Prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56:6-8).

When these words were written, the Temple of Solomon was still standing as the House of Prayer for Israel. But the prophet speaks here of a *future* Temple which should be a House of Prayer, not for Israel only, but 'for all peoples.' That House has not yet been erected, but will certainly be, for Zechariah testifies—6:12-13 that—

"The man whose Name is THE BRANCH . . . shall build the Temple of Yahweh."

—a Temple very minutely described by Ezekiel, beginning in ch. 40.

Upon the altar of this Temple, then, the burnt offerings and sacrifices of the sons of the stranger will be accepted: offerings which shall be selected from the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth, for, says Isaiah, the Gentiles shall come to the light of Jerusalem, and the kings the brightness of her rising, when she shall arise and shine, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon her; and—

"They shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto her, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto her. They shall come up with acceptance on Mine altar, and I will glorify the House of My glory" (Isa. 60:1-7).

Again, Isaiah tells us that in a time (which has hitherto never obtained) when—

"The Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians, and Israel shall be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of Palestine."

—then there shall be —

". . . an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, a pillar at the border thereof to Yahweh. And it shall be for a sign, and for a witness unto Yahweh of armies in the land of Egypt:

"For they shall cry unto the Lord because of oppressors, and He shall send them a Saviour and a Great One, and he shall deliver them.

"And Yahweh shall be known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians shall know Yahweh in that day, and *shall do sacrifice and oblation*: yea, they shall vow a vow unto Yahweh, and perform it" (Isa. 19:19-25).

When they do sacrifice and oblation thus, it will be at the yearly festival of Tabernacles, for—

"Every one that is left of the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the I-shall-be of armies, and to *keep the Feast of Tabernacles*" (Zech. 14:16).

Now, the Feast of Tabernacles cannot be kept without sacrifice, as will appear by consulting the law by which the festival was decreed—

"The 15th day of this 7th month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles, 7 days unto Yahweh. On the first day shall be a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein.

"Seven days ye shall *offer an offering made by fire* unto Yahweh. On the 8th day shall be a holy convocation; ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Yahweh: it is a solemn assembly" (Lev. 23:34-36).

For the Gentiles to keep this feast, they must observe it as the Israelites did before them, according to the law; and not as they 'keep the sabbath' now—observing the 1st or 8th instead of the 7th day, after a fashion of their own, omitting those requirements not convenient.

The Feast of Passover is also to be observed in the Age to Come; which cannot be kept without sacrifice. Jesus said (Luke 22:16)—

"I will not eat any more of the Passover *until* it be fulfilled in the Kingdom."

This was equivalent to saying—

"*When the Passover is fulfilled in the Kingdom I will eat of it.*"

Hence we find its restoration testified by Ezekiel—

"On the 14th day of the 1st month ye shall have the Passover a feast of 7 days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. And upon that day shall the Prince prepare [by the priests who offer his burnt-offerings and his peace-offerings, 46:2] for himself and all the people of the land, a bullock for a sin-offering.

"And 7 days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt-offering to Yahweh, 7 bullocks & 7 rams without blemish, & a kid of the goats daily for a sin-offering.

"And he shall prepare a meat-offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and a hin of oil for an ephah" (Ezek. 45:21-24).

And in the next verse the Feast of Tabernacles is thus referred to—

"In the 7th month, on the 15th day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the 7 days, according to the sin-offering, according to the burnt-offering, and according to the meat-offering, and according to the oil."

The reader will observe, however, that the Passover is a feast for Israel's observance, not for that of the nations. The Prince, or High Priest, is to prepare it—

"For himself, and for all the people *of the land*."

—that is, of Palestine; because the Passover is the memorial of the deliverance of the 12 Tribes and their rulers from the power of all that hate them. In this deliverance, when it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God, the nations are punished after the manner of the Egyptians, becoming a sacrifice at the hands of the Destroyer, while he *passes over* Israel whom he comes to save. The Passover is the '4th of July' for Israel—the anniversary of the independence of their nation; which can only be celebrated by those Gentiles in the Age to Come who acquire citizenship in their land.

In respect of the Feast of Tabernacles, or *Feast of Ingathering*, the nations may well rejoice with Israel in the celebration thereof; for it will memorialize *their* ingathering into the Abrahamic fold when they shall all be blessed in Abraham and his Seed.

But the possibility of national ingratitude for so great a benefit is implied in the following words of the prophet—

"And it shall be that whoso will not come up of the families of the earth, unto Jerusalem, to worship the King, the I-shall-be of armies, even upon them shall be no rain" (Zech. 14:17).

But this would be no punishment to Egypt, because rain does not fall there: her fertility is maintained by the inundations of the Nile. So—

"If the family of Egypt go not up and come not, that has no rain, there shall be the plague wherewith Yahweh shall smite the nations that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

"This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (vs. 18-19).

This same witness concludes his testimony relative to the constitution of things in the Age to Come by declaring that sacrifice shall be offered in a Temple at Jerusalem. His words are—

"The pots in the House of Yahweh shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of armies. And all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil therein. And in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the House of the I-shall-be of armies"

(Zech. 14:20-21).

This can only relate to the future; because the sacrificing is to be practised at a time when the Canaanite no more intrudes where it is unlawful for him to go. 'The Canaanite' is a phrase put for the *enemy* of Israel: the enemy shall no more be in the House of Yahweh.

But the enemy is *now* lord of Jerusalem, and has established a temple of his superstition upon the site chosen of Yahweh for the House of His Name. The Ottoman is for the present the 'Canaanite' of the Holy City: the desolating abomination of the Glorious Land.

But better times are fast approaching, when the last of the Canaanites shall be ignominiously expelled. Hear what Zephaniah says—3:14-15—

"Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

"Yahweh takes away thy judgments: He *casts out thine enemy*. The King of Israel, Yahweh, is in the midst of thee: *thou shalt not see evil any more*."

Then shall the Stone refused of the builders have become head of the corner—Psa. 118: 22, and those of the city who behold him shall say—

"Blessed is he that comes in the Name of Yahweh! The Mighty One is Yahweh Who showeth us light. *Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.* O give thanks unto Yahweh, for He is good: because His mercy is for the Age!" (Psa. 118:26-29).

When the Daily Sacrifice was taken away by the 5th Horn of the Grecian Goat in the days of Titus, it was only an interruption, not a final abolition, of sacrifice. It was a suppression of it for '*many days,*' at the expiration of which it will be restored with other things suppressed. This is apparent from the testimony of Hosea, who says—

"The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince (or High Priest), and *without a sacrifice,* etc. . .

"Afterward [after the '*many days*' have expired] shall the children of Israel return [to Palestine], and seek Yahweh their God, and David their King, and shall fear Yahweh and His goodness in the *latter days*"

(Hos. 3:4-5).

These '*latter days,*' then, succeed the '*many days*' which have not yet expired. When they arrive, Israel will again have a King, *and* a Prince, *and* a sacrifice. And that king will be David II, who will be a prince, likewise, after the order of Melchizedek for 1000 years.

And to this agrees the testimony of Jeremiah who, speaking of the perpetuity of David's throne from the commencement of the reign of the man whose Name is THE BRANCH, saith—

"In those days shall Judah be saved [which cannot be affirmed of Judah yet], and Jerusalem shall dwell safely. And this is the Name which shall be proclaimed to her: YAHWEH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (23:6-7).

And here is the reason given for Judah's salvation and Jerusalem's safety: "For," continues he—

"DAVID SHALL NEVER WANT A MAN TO SIT UPON THE THRONE OF THE HOUSE (or Kingdom) OF ISRAEL: *neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before Me to offer burnt-offerings and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually*" (Jer. 33: 17-18).

Here is an offering of sacrifices by Levites contemporary with the reign of a Son of David upon the throne of Israel. It is evident, therefore, that the '*never*' in the text commences with a '*henceforth*' which is yet in the future. The epoch of that '*henceforth*' is the salvation of Judah and the placing of Jerusalem in such a position that she maybe *safely* inhabited, which cannot be until her enemy is cast out. From *that* time, David shall never be without a successor in the throne of Israel. And that successor shall be Messiah, during whose priestly reign Levites shall do sacrifice continually.

"If thou canst break My (Yahweh's) covenant of the day and of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season . . ."

If thou, reader, canst do this—

". . . *then* also may My Covenant, saith Yahweh, be broken that I have made with David My servant, that he should not have a Son to reign upon his throne: and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers" (vs. 20-21).

This is equivalent to saying that no combination of powers on earth or in heaven can prevent the Messiah, who is David's Son, from reigning on Mt. Zion where David reigned; or the Levites superseding the Mohammedans, Greeks, Latins, and Protestants in Jerusalem, and doing sacrifice there continually.

From the evidence, then, of these witnesses, it is clear that sacrifice and offering *will* be elements of Divine service in the Millennial Age. They will be '*pure*' and '*pleasant*' offerings to Yahweh—Mal. 1: 11; 3: 4, because they will be perfect offerings, and offered in righteousness by a purified priesthood. They will be perfect, because they will be perfected by the sacrifice of him whose expiatory death they represent.

They will be pure offerings and pleasant, because the offerers will present them with enlightened faith and purified hearts. The Levites, refined as gold and silver—Mal. 3:3, will slay the sacrifices of the people; while the sons of Zadok—once dead but then alive for ever more, and '*kings and priests for God*' with the Prince of Israel in their midst—will:

". . . come near to Me (Yahweh) to minister unto Me, and they shall stand before Me to offer unto Me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God.

"They shall enter into My Sanctuary, and they shall come near to My table, to minister unto Me, and they shall keep My charge" (Ezek.44:15-16).

Such, however, was not the case in the Mosaic Age. The offerings were neither perfect, pure, nor pleasant to Yahweh. They were imperfect, not having been perfected by the expiation they typified, but keeping up a remembrance of *unpardoned* offences every year.

This will not be the case with the perfect offerings of the Age to Come. These will not be remembrancers of transgressions unforgiven; but *memorials of pardon* through the sacrifice of Messiah the Prince. There is no day of annual atonement in the future age. Israel's offences are blotted out once for all as a thick cloud, when the New Covenant is made with them on their resettlement in the Holy Land when that age begins: a forgiveness of national offences which lasts for ever, as it is written—

"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more" (Heb. 8:12).

But the Mosaic offerings were not always unpleasant to Yahweh. It was the abominations of the offerers that made them disgusting in His sight. The high priests and their sacerdotal households, who ought to have been 'Holiness to Yahweh,' were very often men of reprobate character, setting an example to Israel which they were not slow to follow, thus verifying the sayings (Hos.4:9; Isa.9:16)—

"Like priests, like people . . . The leaders of this people cause them to err."

This accords with the handwriting of Yahweh by Malachi—

"Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah hath profaned the holiness of Yahweh which he loved . . .

"Yahweh will cut off the man that doeth this . . . *him that offereth an offering to Yahweh of armies.*

"And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, *insomuch that He regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with goodwill at your hands.*"

(Mal. 2:11-13).

This implies that there was a time when He *did* regard the offering, and did receive it with goodwill, or pleasure, at their hand. Indeed the Spirit saith so in so many words when testifying of the purification of the sons of Levi, as it is written—

"Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant to Yahweh (or, regarded and received with goodwill), *as in the days of old, and as in the former years*" (Mal. 3:4).

Such doctrine and practices, then, as these caused Yahweh to take no pleasure in the sacrifice and offering He had ordained in the Mosaic Law. And therefore Messiah came to do, or establish, the Second Will—to bring it into force through the offering of the body the I-*Shall- Be* had prepared for Himself.

It was not possible, besides, for the blood of bulls and of goats offered by the Law to take away sins. They needed perfecting in their antitype, the restored body of Yahweh—

"Therefore coming into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou requirest not, but a body hast Thou restored for me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast no pleasure.

"Then said I, Behold, I come (as it is written of me in the volume of the little book) to do that which is Thy will, O God.

"Saying above, Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offerings and offering for sin Thou desirest not, neither hast pleasure (which are offered according to the Law); then he said, Behold, I come to *do Thy will*, O God.

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of the anointed Jesus once only" (Heb. 10:5-10).

Messiah—having thus been obedient unto death, and brought the Abrahamic Will, or Covenant, into force—will, when he comes again in power and glory, carry out the purposes of the New, or Second, Covenant; and in so doing, cause to be offered to Yahweh by the sons of Levi in Judah's midst, pure offerings that will be pleasant to Him as in the days of former years—his own one offering having perfected for a continuance the things which the Mosaic Law could not, for nothing was perfected by it—Heb. 10:14; 7:19.

As to Eph. 2:15, the subject of the discourse is the *abolition of the cause of enmity between Jews and Gentiles*, which was—

"The law of the commandments in ordinances" (v.15).

—which prevented peace between them. This ground of enmity he abolished when, by the one offering of his body on the cross, he took it out of the way, and established the 'better Covenant' which promised good things to Jews and Gentiles upon the same conditions.

If Christ had not died and risen again, the Mosaic Law would have continued in force to this day; and there would have been no union of Jews and Gentiles in 'One Body.' And consequently the Gentiles would have continued helplessly—

"Without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph.2:12).

To enable us (Gentiles) to get at Christ, by becoming citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel, it was necessary to remove the Mosaic Law out of our way, and introduce another that would be more favourable.

By becoming proselytes of Judaism, Gentiles might come to be with Moses, and citizens of Israel's Commonwealth under his Law. But as this could not make alive, they would remain under sentence of death; and enjoy nothing beyond the temporal advantages of a residence in the Holy Land in common with the natives.

It could give them no right to be citizens in the Age to Come, and to reign for ever with Messiah over Israel and the nations for a 1000 years. *This* right is derived from the Covenant which Jesus established or confirmed in dying and rising again. If we take hold of it by believing the things promised in it; and *also* take hold of him by faith in him as the confirming sacrifice or mediator thereof; and become obedient to the 'Law of Faith' which commands such believers to be baptized, we become children of the Covenant, and thru Jesus acquire citizenship in the Israelitish Commonwealth of the Age to Come.

The text in Col. 2:14 relates to the same topic as that in Ephesians: namely, the taking away the cause of division between Jew and Gentile, which was the Mosaic Law, or 'handwriting.' While this handwriting was in force there could be no union between Jews and Gentiles in 'One Body' as members of which they were to love as brethren. The Law divided them, and set them at variance; as the Gospel now separates those that obey it *from all religious fellowship with disobedient believers.*

The Abrahamic Covenant—which was ratified by God for Christ 430 years before the Law of Moses was given—Gal.3: 17—knows nothing of that Law. The Law was an addition—not to it as a codicil—but as a distinct covenant or will *additionally* enjoined upon the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob till the Seed, or Christ, should come—Gal. 3:19 to whom the promise of the everlasting possession of the Holy Land was made in the (Abrahamic) Covenant ratified for him.

"It (the Mosaic Law) was added because of transgressions" (same verse).
—among the Israelites, who while in Egypt served the gods of the Egyptians, and were fast merging into forgetfulness of the good things covenanted to their nation under Christ.

The Abrahamic Covenant contains no cause of enmity between Jews and Gentiles, for it promises among other things that—

"In Abraham's Seed (Christ) shall all nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18)

'All nations' include Jews and Gentiles. Not so the Law, however. It was a 'fiery law': in itself 'holy, just and good'—Rom. 7: 12; but notwithstanding its intrinsic excellence, it was 'weak through the flesh'—Rom. 8: 3, in which, Paul says, 'no good thing dwelleth'—Rom. 7: 18.

On account therefore of this weakness, the holy, just and good Mosaic Law (which was ordained for the life of all under it, saying, "If a man do it he shall live by it") was 'found to be death' to every Israelite, for it said—

"Cursed be everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them" (Gal. 3:10).
—which was too great a demand upon poor weak humanity to accord. Even Jesus, who was without sin, no fault being found in him—was cursed by it, saying—

"Cursed be every one that hangeth upon a tree" (Gal. 3:13).

Thus he became a curse for us. This law, then, was found to be death to him. Can it therefore after this be found to be life to any other mortal? By no means! Hence it condemns to death every Israelite, & everyone else that seeks justification by it. And if God's people with their King were sentenced to death by it, of what avail can it be to us Gentiles? Certainly of none; and therefore it is written—

"Are we (Jews) better than they (the Gentiles)? No, in no wise: for both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin"
(Romans 3:9).

So that— "All the world becomes guilty before God" (v. 19).

Here then we behold mankind in an awful dilemma: *naturally*, under the sentence pronounced upon Adam, which is death; and Mosaicly, cursed to death by a law ordained for life, because humanity is too weak to keep it. If the state of the case had continued thus, the 'gates of hades' would have prevailed for ever over Jew and Gentile, patriarch and prophet, from the first transgression to the natural extinction of the race.

The 'wisdom of God in a mystery'—1 Cor. 2: 7, however, devised a happier result than this. The world 'being dead in sins'—that is, dead Adamically and Mosaicly because of transgression—He sent Jesus into the world to take the Mosaic Handwriting out of the way by nailing it to his cross. And this Jesus did by *fulfilling all the righteousness*

shadowed forth in that Law which cursed him on the tree—a. part of which representative righteousness was the atonement for sin by blood.

Being nailed to the cross as the result of his voluntary surrender of his life, he may be said to have nailed himself to the cross by the hand of sinners; for, saith he—

"No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18).

And therefore it was not suicide, but 'obedience unto death.' In being without sin, and in perfecting the sacrificial righteousness of the Law, he 'nailed it to the cross'—Col. 2:14 when he nailed himself there.

Having therefore perfected the righteousness of the Law in himself, the *shadow* was no longer necessary, as the *substance* had come. In dying, consequently, he proclaimed, 'It is finished!'—John 19:30. And being perfected, in a few years after, it 'vanished away'—Heb. 8: 13. Thus—

"He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14).

Having in this way divested the authorities and powers of Israel (for they derived their ecclesiastical and civil authority from the Law), triumphing over them in rising from the dead, he exposed them with boldness of speech by the apostles—v. 15.

The Mosaic Covenant being taken out of the way by the sacrificial death of Jesus, the Abrahamic was brought into force by the same means. For the blood of Jesus which perfected the Mosaic sin-offerings, also rendered purifying or consecrated the Abrahamic Covenant—called 'The New' though made before the Law, because it *came into force* on nailing the Mosaic Law to the cross.

The Abrahamic Covenant, I say, was rendered purifying by the blood of Jesus; so that 'whosoever believeth' the things of the Covenant, his faith and resulting disposition shall be counted to him for repentance and remission of sins in his Name.

The Abrahamic Covenant, however, does not exclude the use of sacrifice. It was typically ratified or confirmed *by the sacrifice of animals consumed by fire from heaven*, before the Mosaic Law was given. So when the things it covenants are fully accomplished in the Age to Come, sacrifice will be restored, *not as typical of the future, but as a memorial of the past.*

Blood-shedding in the Age to Come will commemorate the shedding of the blood of Jesus in the end of the Mosaic Age. It will occupy the position in 'the service' that the breaking of the loaf does now to mortal believers of the Truth in hope of the glory of God—

"This do IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

The broken bread and poured-out wine are remembrancers, or memorials, of the body broken and blood of Jesus shed for the remission of the sins of those who should become his brethren. When he appears a second time, this form of remembrance will cease, for it was to be observed (to use his words)—

"UNTIL I come."

Shall we say that when this unbloody memorial of his sacrificial death shall cease by the statute that limits it, *there will be NO memorial ordained to keep it in remembrance throughout the Age to Come?*

If we affirm this, we must reject all that testimony adduced in the former part of this article, which declares the restoration of sacrifice. Its restoration is certain. And when restored, upon what principle will it exist? Will it represent the sacrifice of a future Christ? That is impossible. Then it will not be *typical*.

Will it be as the procuring cause of the remission of the sins of the people living in that age? That would be to ignore the death of Jesus, which is inadmissible.

Will it be to render purifying a new covenant? None such exists to be confirmed and dedicated.

Will it be for the cleansing of the resurrected saints? For them, there is 'no more sacrifice for sins,' having been by the one offering of Jesus sanctified and perfected forever.

It is upon none of these principles. There remains, then, but one other principle upon which sacrificial blood-shedding can be restituted in the Age to Come, and that is the one already set forth—even as a *memorial of the consecration of the Abrahamic Will* by the blood of Jesus, styled 'the Blood of the Covenant'—Heb. 10:29; by the

which the future rulers of the world are now sanctified. And the future *nations* of that world, Gentile and Jewish, *will be made holy* through the dedicatory offering of Jesus Christ once.

Thus will God have 'justified the nations through faith'—Gal. 3:8, as He promised to Abraham, saying—
"In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).

So that then 'they which be of faith,' be they individuals or nations, will 'be blessed with faithful Abraham'
—Gal. 3: 9.

I believe the foregoing will enable the reader to form an enlightened and scriptural judgment on the question of sacrifice in the Age to Come, and its congruity with the present sanctification and perfection of the faithful in Christ Jesus, who shall be with him kings and priests for God—Rev. 5: 10, and therefore offerers to Him of the *memorial blood of the world's sacrifices, in honour of His goodness, and a hearty thanksgiving for all the blessings they enjoy.*
—Herald, Dec. 1854

Holiness Becometh Thine House

AN URGENT APPEAL TO GIVE ALL TO GOD WHILE IT IS YET DAY

"The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again"

—2 Cor. 5:14-15 RV.

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

IT IS well, brethren and sisters, that we should live under the *constant recollection* of the fact which we have just been setting forth in song—the omnipresence of God. If we did, we should succeed to a greater extent than we do in the great objects of our calling.

It is true that those objects are not to be finally realized until the Lord comes, and calls from the dead those of his friends who are sleeping in the dust, and to his wedding-feast such among the living as are worthy of being associated with him.

But there are objects connected with our calling that *must* be realized *even now*, before we can be permitted to participate in the far greater associations to be developed at the Lord's return. We are called at present to sustain a *certain attitude*, and that attitude has many sides to it. We are called to the attitude of witnesses for the Truth; but that is insufficient of itself to give us a participation in the Kingdom of God. No man who merely believes the Truth and speaks of it to his neighbour will be saved; for we find mention of some to be rejected in that day who will say—
"Have we not preached in thy Name, and in thy Name done many wonderful works?" (Matt.7:22).

If our fitness rises no higher than an apprehension and agitation of the *theory* of the Truth, we are not fit for the Kingdom of God. The Truth is intended to hew us, intellectually and morally, into a certain shape. That shape is the *shape of Christ*. We have him for an example, and if we do not follow his example, we shall *not* stand with him in the day of his glory.

We are called to holiness. Now that word is a very expressive and comprehensive one. Holiness is a state of *cleanness*. And cleanness in its moral relations consists of freedom from *all* that is constituted morally polluting by the law of God. That is right which God commands: that is wrong which He forbids. That is holy which He calls clean: and that is unholy which He disallows. There is no other rule of righteousness than that.

The moral philosophy of the world is a very artificial affair. In most cases, it is an attempt to justify the commandments of God on natural principles. Certain maxims have been brought to the notice of the world in the teaching of Christ; and men of carnal minds, utterly unsubject to the law of God, have taken hold of the mere aesthetic beauties of these things, and constructed out of them a philosophy of their own—a standard of their own.

But in point of fact they have no standard. There is no standard of right except the will of God. When men begin to talk of 'the eternal fitness of things,' they get into an intellectual morass. *There is no standard of righteousness but obedience to God's commandments.*

God's commandments are unmistakable. They are so very simple that we are liable to forget them: and if we forget them, we cannot be saved. We *must* keep them in remembrance, and *act* upon them— especially this last. It is the doing of them that is acceptable: it is not sufficient to acknowledge them—

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Now Christ says we are to be kind to each other, and if we are not so, however much we may know the Truth, we do not belong to him. The knowledge of the Truth will then be our condemnation.

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom.8:9).

Now, besides kindness, the spirit of Christ was a spirit of worship. He often retired to pray. And he told the woman of Samaria that the Father sought a *certain class* (in spirit and in truth) to worship Him.

What is the worship of God, brethren and sisters? It is the deferential and reverential *concentration of the mind upon Him*, intelligently, consciously, lovingly, adoringly, trustingly, and prayerfully; with a deep sense of the things disclosed concerning Him and us in the Truth. It is an attitude of mind requiring the highest abstraction.

Merely to sing is not to worship; nor is it to deliver a well-worded address to the Deity. There is such a thing as drawing near with the lips while the heart is far away. This was the worship that God abhorred in Israel, and it will be no more acceptable at our hands in the Name of Jesus. We require to abstract our minds from surroundings, and fix them on the mighty Universal Presence in Whose hand our breath is, and Whose are all our ways.

This mental attitude, whether in an individual or in an assembly, will produce indifference to immediate surroundings. It cannot coexist with attention to these surroundings. If, therefore, in singing, you see some look about to see what neighbours are doing, or speak and whisper with his neighbours, or attending to any second matter whatever—you are yourself interfered with in the luxury of worship, and perceive evidence of a want of worship in the disturber.

This is an evil. The worship of God requires *all* our attention—the complete fixing of our mind upon Him, knowing that His ear is open and that His eye is upon us. As David expresses it—

"Thou hast beset me before and behind . . . Thou knowest my thoughts afar off . . . The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee" (Psalm 139:2-12).

Now, our meetings are designed for the collective exercise of this thought, and the possessors of holiness will be *full of responsive sympathy* to this supreme object of our association. We ought all to be so conditioned mentally that when we stand up to sing, we *sing to God*, and do not go through a performance merely. A performance is abhorrent to God, and to all holy men. It is one of the abominations of our time that mere performances take place as a professed act of collective worship. It would be better to have bad music with a general concentration of the mind on God and His Truth, than the finest strains with an absence of that concentration.

It is *now* that we must pay attention to these things, for the present is all-important to us. It will be too late to mend our ways when Christ comes: and Christ's coming is not very far from every one of us. This statement is one that has been true ever since the time of the apostles, and it finds illustration in the chapter that has just been read. 'Absent from the body'—2 Cor. 5:8 practically means to be present with the Lord. There is no conscious break to the person who undergoes the absence. It is an instantaneous change of condition.

I have been thinking much upon that point this last week. I have thought a chart might be drawn which would very vividly bring that before the mind's eye: that, as we are unconscious in death, there is no such thing in relation to us individually as death, because we shall be unaware of death happening. It will be all gone before we know it has happened.

Although, actually, the reception does not take place until he comes; and although, actually, none of us will be glorified until all are, yet in relation to each individual consciousness, it will appear to be instantaneously occurrent when we close our eyes in death, because—as unconscious of death as of sleep, and more so—we shall appear at once to stand face to face with the Lord. Consequently, if we are to die a week hence, practically the coming of the Lord is only a week away from us.

It seems to me there is great comfort in that thought. In fact, it gives the consolation which orthodox believers take, and which they think we lack; but which we do not lack at all. To contemplate the gap of time that may actually divide any generation from the coming of Jesus, may give us the idea of its being a very long period. But when we are dead we shall know nothing about that gap at all; and therefore the Lord is near, in that sense, to every one of us.

In our century, we know that in another sense he is very near. We are just in the position that Christ indicated to his disciples, when he said they were to watch lest they might be taken unawares. And we are watching for his speedy appearing; for although we know not the day nor the hour, we have been given to know the dispensation by the light which God has vouchsafed by Daniel and John.

Beyond the general knowledge of the time of the end, we know not the hour of his appearance. We do not know in what part of the latter-day program it is intended he shall reveal himself to his servants. It is well to see that whatever may occur in this respect, to us as individuals he is 'at the door.'

This is a thought which has great power in giving the Truth a *reality* it may fail to have if we are all the time poisoning ourselves in relation to great periods. It enables us to surrender ourselves more entirely to our espousals. We are called to be espoused to Christ. Paul said to the Corinthians that he had espoused them as a chaste virgin to Christ—2 Cor. 11:2. They were betrothed, and that is *our* position. That is to say, we are *entirely his*. We do not possess the 'liberty' the world claims, and which some mistaken servants claim. Our position is that which Paul defines—

"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh" (2 Cor. 5:16).

When a man puts on the Lord Jesus in obedience to the Truth, he assumes a new position, and his relation to things around him is altogether different from what they are in nature. He sees things in quite a different light. He is not of the flesh, and recognizes no scheme as having a claim on his sympathy that merely has to do with the present evil world. His hope is to be 'delivered from this evil world'—Gal. 1: 4.

Christ has given himself that this deliverance may be accomplished. Our position, meanwhile, is that of *denying ourselves ungodliness & worldly lusts*, and looking for the blessed hope of his coming again. We are 'not our own'—1 Cor. 6: 19. As Paul says—

"The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then WERE ALL DEAD (*RV: then all died*).

"And that he died for all, that they who live should *not henceforth live unto themselves*, but unto him who died and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14).

The argument of that is very simple. Paul says that if one died for all, representatively, then *all died in him*: so that we should reckon ourselves *dead and buried*, so far as this life's relationships go. We are not, as Peter says, to live the rest of our time 'in the flesh,' to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but to *do the will* of him who lived and died for us—1 Peter 4:2.

That seems exceedingly reasonable; and we shall certainly find out on that day, when the Lord stands upon the earth again, and masses before him all his people, that *none will be selected for companionship in his glory* but those who have answered to this description—who have LIVED FOR HIM, and been faithful stewards of their trust.

None doubt this theoretically. The great matter is to get believers to recognize the fact *practically*. I presume that these first-day meetings were instituted by Christ for the very purpose of enabling us to realize these great things. If we did realize them, we should be more practical and earnest in our position as the Lord's servants.

Just imagine the Lord Jesus in the earth again, and ourselves summoned to meet him. What would be the great anxiety on the part of every one of us? *Only one*. All the anxieties of a lifetime would take flight—*except one*: 'What does he think of us?' That will be the engrossing concern of the moment.

Now, what is it that determines Christ's opinion of us? Is it the state of mind that will be produced by the occurrence of his advent? No: for then *everybody* will be in a state of readiest loyalty; *everybody* will then see that Christ is really the only important calculation of life; and, of course, they will be prepared with all manner of protestations and professions, with tears, how much they desire him.

These will not move Christ. That which determines his opinion is what we are doing *now*. He has made known the principle of his judgment—

"I will give to every one of you *according as your work shall be*" (Rev. 22:12)

Therefore, *now* is the time of action. Let every man look to what he is doing—and every woman. Let them remember that their present daily life—dull, uninteresting, unimportant though it may appear—is really pregnant with their destiny. *All* depends upon how they turn the *present* time to account. Future position will be determined entirely by present deportment. The important thing is to be—(Col. 1:9)—

"*Filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*"

And how can we be in this state if we neglect the means whereby we may attain to it: the reading of the Word, and the assembling of ourselves together?

We ought not to trust to second-hand information in this important matter. Speeches we may listen to and articles we may read are liable to be greatly diluted and corrupted by human thought. We are apt to be misled by this one's opinion and that one's opinion as to what we should do. When we consider that in *that* day—with which any individual may be face to face immediately—human opinions and human professions will disappear like mist in the Divine presence, we can see how true it is that the only wisdom, at present, in the midst of all our toils and labour, is to adhere to the Word of God, which is—

"A lamp to our feet, and a light to our path" (Psa. 119:105).

What will Christ care as to a man's 'position' in the estimation of fellow-men? He has told us that (Luke 16:15)—

"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

He looks not at a man's 'position.' We must remember that Christ is the embodiment of the Great Power that said by Isaiah—

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways" (55:8).

We shall be judged by the simple standard: "*Have you done what I commanded you?*" That will be the one simple question. Indeed, it is the very simplicity of it that seems to turn people away from it.

"*HAVE YOU DONE WHAT I COMMANDED YOU?*"

We all know what we are doing, and we shall be able to give a right account, either for good or evil. But whatever we may say about ourselves, he will *make manifest* what we are. Our anxiety should be, while the Lord delays, to get on the right side of the account.

All his commandments have to do with practical daily life. Hence, next to a knowledge of the Truth, the *practical management of daily life* is the main question. There is a reason for laying continual stress on this. Having had to struggle out of darkness, we have had our minds drawn very much into argumentative and doctrinal channels. We have been much occupied in getting to know *what Truth is*.

Consequently, we are liable to stop short at our attainment of this, whereas we have done but a small thing. We are, as it were, in no more forward a position than the crowds that listened to Christ. They heard what he had to say; they knew what the Truth was: but that merely opened the door for their salvation. *Obedience* was the difficulty.

The knowledge of the Truth only opens the door. We cannot be saved before that. There is no hope for us at all apart from the Gospel. But the Gospel only gives us the *start*. It all depends how we walk after that.

What ought the Assembly of Christ to be but a representation, on a small scale, of what is to be made politically dominant when Christ comes, and when God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven? We are called *unto* that Kingdom. Therefore, as an assembly of those who are called unto the Kingdom, we ought to exemplify those characteristics that will appertain to it in the day of its manifestation.

All the purity of individual thought and action which will prevail then in the world; all rejoicing in the Truth and making our boast in God that will then be the universal law; and that *loving of men and serving of God* that will prevail—**OUGHT TO BE INCIPIENTLY VISIBLE IN OUR ASSEMBLY**. We ought to be the Kingdom of God in miniature. In fact, all the *saints* are: there is no doubt about that—though there may be a doubt as to who are the saints.

Therefore, let us walk in the light of the Word. Do not heed what is said on the right hand or on the left. Avail yourself of good company, if you can get it—but take care you do not get injured where you expected to be benefited. Remember that most of those by whom you are surrounded (in the ecclesia) have but recently emerged from the world with all its ignorance, disobedience, stupidity and carnality; and that you are not to be despondent and lose heart because others may not exemplify the Truth.

If others do not, *you* try, at least. Save yourself from this untoward generation. It is just as untoward as the generation of Peter, and it is only by the means offered by Peter, in the Name of Christ, that we have any hope at all.

—June, 1872

NOVEMBER ANSWERS

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Saul—Benjamite | 15. Elijah—Tishbite | 31. Ahijah—Shilonite |
| 2. Hiel—Bethelite | 16. Nabal—Carmelite | 32. Achish—Philistine |
| 3. Ittai—Gittite | 17. Philip—of Bethsaida | 33. Joseph—of Arimathea |
| 4. Jesse—Bethlehemite | 18. Cozbi—Midianite | 34. Hushai—Archite |
| 5. Agag—Amalekite | 19. Hagar—Egyptian | 35. Tobiah—Ammonite |
| 6. Ruth—Moabite | 20. Cyrus—Persian | 36. Eliezer—of Damascus |
| 7. Peter—Galilean | 21. Lydia—of Thyatira | 37. Haman—Agagite |
| 8. Titus—Greek | 22. Amos—Tekoite | 38. Zophar—Naamathite |
| 9. Doeg—Edomite | 23. Micah—Morasthite | 39. Nahum—Elkoshite |
| 10. Elihu—Buzite | 24. Heber—Kenite | 40. Gideon—Abiezrite |
| 11. Pilate—Roman | 25. Oman—Jebusite | 41. Nicolas—of Antioch |
| 12. Gaius—of Derbe | 26. Shuah—Canaanite | 42. Eliphaz—Temanite |
| 13. Uriah—Hittite | 27. Hiram—Tyrian | 43. Sopater—of Berea |
| 14. Sihon—Amorite | 28. Darius—Mede | 44. Manoah—Danite |
| | 29. Simon—Cyrenian | 45. Geshem—Arabian |
| | 30. Bildad—Shuhite | 46. Abishag—Shunammite |
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LET us not 'compare ourselves with ourselves'—that is, with the brethren and sisters around us. That, says the apostle, is 'not wise' (2 Cor. 10:12). By this course, a community's standards of conduct and holiness and service and sacrifice gradually and imperceptibly sink lower and lower toward the way of the flesh, with blind complacency. Let us rather constantly and honestly compare our service and way of life with the holy precepts of the Word, and with the humbling and mortifying examples of Christ and of Paul, which are specifically set before us as patterns to copy and standards of comparison. This way a community's standards and accomplishments and devotion and service gradually get higher and higher, toward the Spirit, even 'from glory to glory' (2 Cor. 2:18).

THE POOR OF THIS WORLD, RICH IN FAITH

THE 'pure and undefiled religion' of God has no present temporalities or worldly interests. It has no 'lands, tenements and hereditaments'; nor 'states, colleges or sacred edifices.' It is like the Son of God in the days of his flesh: homeless, houseless, and poverty-stricken among the sons of men. —Elpis Israel, 1910 Ed., p.146

I Am the Light of the World

"And they, being convicted of their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last"
—John 8:9

JOHN CHAPTER EIGHT

IN the absence of the Lord Jesus, we have again assembled ourselves together, to do as he has bid us do, to remember him by the partaking of the emblems, the bread and the wine, before us on the table.

Another week has been added to history, a week that we cannot recall—that is, to re-do or undo whatever has been done—for the record has been entered in the 'Lamb's Book of Life'—Rev. 21. 27. yet there is a joyful part of that week which we are happy to recall to memory. The part we desire to recall and rejoice in is the interview with our new brother, who is present with us here this morning, and will partake of the emblems with us for the first time.

For long we have been meeting and performing our regular duties; and we are reminded of what we recently read in 1 Chron. 25 where we have the selection, under the righteous kingship of the beloved David, of 24 orders of workers to do faithful service of song, worship and praise in the Temple of God at Jerusalem.

The leader was Asaph, whose name is familiar to us as appearing at the head of many of David's psalms—he being the one to arrange for their use in the Temple service. He too composed songs of praise. His name means '*One who gathers together*,' which is productive of many thoughts. He was a prophet as well as a singer—2 Chron. 29:30: he prophesied in song. All prophecy is song, for it is all to, and for, the praise and glory of God.

Of each of the 24 courses of song-leaders (which began with Asaph's course), we are told—
"He, his sons, and his brethren, were twelve."

And the choice of these men was made 'by lot,' of which we are told—

"The whole disposing thereof is of Yahweh" (Prov. 16:33).

Only 2 days ago we read again Jesus' words (John 6:44)—

"No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

And as in the choice by lot of the workers in the Temple: 'He, and his sons, and his brethren, were 12'—we also have laboured long and often in the Vineyard of the Lord of hosts, but remained for many days like unto the Temple-workers, as we, our brethren, and our sisters, were 12. But today this has been changed.

And God's lot has changed it. Prior to this our lot being changed, we had tried to contact our now new brother before, but things got lost on the trail. But today we have become 13, numbering with the Lord Jesus and his little band of 12 disciples. This indication we joyfully accept, comforted too with the knowledge that another may soon follow. We recall what we have read in Acts 17:10-12 relative to the apostle Paul and his labours, how he went with Silas unto Berea, & coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews, whom he found to be 'more noble' than those in Thessalonica, in that—

"They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Surely, brethren and sisters, as we look through the eyes of the apostle, we can readily see the blessedness so obtained through the Lord Jesus, as the 'Light of the World.' And though men still—

"Love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil" (John 3:19).

—yet as we today now look out into our audience with our extra member, we feel as did Paul in meeting the brethren at Appii Forum—

"He thanked God, and took courage" (Acts 28:15).

And today we have great reason for taking courage. We have one come to us, which in turn will give strength to carry on. And our presence here is truly expressive of what we have set forth in song, like the Temple workers under David and Asaph—

*"We each have laid the world (with all its care and burdens) down,
And to Thine Altar, Christ our Lord, repair: let praise resound,
That Yahweh's Name by us be glorified
When we remember Christ for us hath died.
Thus his commands we joyfully obey.
Remember him each week unto his day."*

'Remember him': and today our Daily Readings lead us to a consideration of a portion of his life among men, in that capacity as the 'Light of the World' (as he terms himself in this chapter—v. 12) , which is the basis of our present thoughts.

And we can see that, no matter what aspect of the Christ-life we may study, it shines forth with light: that true spiritual Light, truly now confirmed by his resurrection from among the dead; and with a Divine brilliance, joy and blessedness—though sadly not recognized today as it should be, and, we rejoice, soon *will* be.

And although Christ shone forth such a Light in his day into the world, that had never been seen before, so that even the officers (as we read yesterday) who went to arrest him, were caused to exclaim—

"Never man spake like *this* Man!" (John 7:46).

—yet the Light will be far greater still when he returns, and shall—

"See the travail of his soul, and be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11).

Coming to John 8, which we read together this morning, we are deeply touched by the thoughts associated with Christ's life here among men. In the closing verse of ch. 7: that is, after the Lord Jesus had been in collision with the Pharisees:

"Every man went unto his own house."

The privileged, powerful rulers of Israel, they left the Temple for the comfort of their own homes. Jesus also left the Temple. Where did *he* go? He climbed the slopes of Mt. Olivet, to pray to his Father under the starry sky.

The Lord Jesus so often did this: those familiar slopes that looked out over the Temple, the House of God, the great centre of Israel's national life and worship—but how corrupt it had all become! This mount had been sanctified by many nights like this, as it was now witnessing the Divine communion of the world's greatest figure in all its long history, before or since. He was spending the night in the mountains, while his adversaries reposed in the warmth and comfort of their prosperous homes in the city below. How true the picture—

"Despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

"The Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

—as the men he came to save 'hid their faces from him.' Truly the adversary in a measure felt triumphant, in having caused him sorrow & grief. Yet their victory rates no higher than that of the soldiers whose weak story was told at his resurrection (Matt. 28:13)—

"His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept."

Returning to John 8: early in the morning Jesus was once more in the Temple—v. 2, and the people crowded to him, and he sat down and preached—with the Pharisees always on hand to try to catch him in either word or deed. They were humiliated many times, but not discouraged in their malicious schemes.

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery."

And with mock respect calling him 'Master,' they said—

"This woman was taken in adultery—in the *very act!*" (v.4).

And they referred piously to Moses and the Law, that saith such should be stoned—

"But what sayest *thou?*" (v.5).

Here is a situation that required great skill and tact to handle, yet the outcome of this incident brings before us again that glorious truth that Jesus was the 'Light of the World.' And as we so study his wonderful life, we recognize more & more fully the truth of the words:

"In him was life, and the life was the Light of men. And the Light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:4-5).

The Pharisees, careless of the woman's feelings, and bent only on achieving their own ends, sought only to make her the instrument of their wicked desire against the Lord Jesus. "Master," said they—

"This woman was taken in adultery, in the very act."

They knew the Law as well as Jesus did; yet they were trying to use their knowledge to obtain their wicked ends, saying to Jesus—

"*Moses* in the Law commanded such should be stoned: what sayest *thou?*"

Truly here is a problem fraught with craftiness and danger. The Pharisees knew, or thought they knew, of Jesus' compassionate attitude toward sinners. Doubtless they felt sure he would not condemn her to be stoned—exposing himself to the accusation that he was deliberately opposing the holy Law they had received from God to which he professed submission.

But if he endorsed the penalty of the Law here, the victory they expected to gain would be greater still, for he would incur the displeasure of the people for giving the appearance of inconsistency, at the same time coming into conflict with the authority of the Roman power, which jealously reserved the right of the death sentence—John 19: 31

So it appeared the enemy had a strong trap from which Christ could not escape. And with hate and triumph shining in their eyes, they eagerly watched the Lord Jesus' reaction, confident they had snared him in a hopeless dilemma. But the truth of his words is again beautifully manifested. He was the Light of the World.

The woman stood before him, no doubt full of shame and fear, & not daring to lift her eyes to this noble man whom the rulers had appointed as her judge. She did not know of the plot that was behind the outward appearance. Jesus did not look at her, but— ..

"Stooped down, and with his finger, wrote on the ground" (v. 6).

His action issued a silent plea to the consciences of her accusers, to leave her alone, and at the same time giving time to be self-convicted. Had they left then, they would have been humbled; yet their humbleness thus manifested would have been nothing to that humiliation Jesus was about to subject them to; not in the vein as a victor over his fallen enemy, but as the faithful Light of the World in its true sense, judging not according to the appearance, but judging righteous judgment—which darkness, unenlightened, comprehended not.

So the moment came when he must, with their 'continued asking/ make the judgment they desired. But it was not to be what they expected. Jesus stood up, and searching the faces of these men who had stooped so low to gain their ends, his gaze burned into their hearts. Never before had they so felt the stature of the holiness and grace of the man that stood before them. Then he said—

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (v. 7).

And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

Brethren and sisters, let us not, as some, take this incident as justification for insincerity or excuse, and say we must accept the erring in their errors, and leave all judgment to God. This denies other Scripture, and is not the lesson here. We remember Jesus' stern words to the woman, "Go, and sin no more." This was not a sincere appeal for judgment, but a Pharisaical trap, and was treated as such.

We know that it is written:

"Behold the goodness and severity of God."

And this righteous balance was also manifested in His beloved Son, as we may recall in our reading of his whole life pattern.

Here in the Temple, in full view of the expectant crowd, these accusers—who had been so aggressively confident a few moments earlier, looked at one another. Jesus had not accused them. He appeared to be taking no notice of them, and gave no evidence of desire to witness their humiliation. His grief would be that it had been necessary.

And so, brethren and sisters, let us look seriously to the future, when we shall stand at the great judgment seat; when 'judgment must come to the House of God.' For some, this tragic scene will be repeated—

"And they that heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last" (v.9).

And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. The woman could have gone too, *but she stayed*. Something bigger than her fear and shame had kept her. Jesus rose, and for the first time looked her full in the face, and said—

"Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" (v.10).

She said, 'No man, Lord.' She called him 'Lord.' His face to her would look purely heavenly, and her heart must have melted before him, as Jesus said—

"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (v. 11).

He did not condone her sin; did not even offer forgiveness and peace, but left her to merit forgiveness by her future conduct and faith. But the woman, like you and I, was given a glimpse of the mercy & grace waiting for our appeal. We hear nothing more of her. Let us hope, tho she went away at Christ's command, she would come back in repentance and thanksgiving and purity of heart, at her own free will; to join the little company who loved much, because forgiven much.

Let us then, with our new brother, press right on with steady footsteps and seriousness of mind, thru darkness & temptation, 'always abounding in the work of the Lord,' for 'we shall reap if we faint not.'—W.J.P.

There Am I in the Midst **TRUE FELLOWSHIP IN THE TRUTH**

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me . . . A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers"—John 10:27, 5

IN the mercy of God, we have been granted another opportunity to gather together to remember our absent Lord in the breaking of bread:

"As often as we do this, we show the Lord's death till he return" (1 Cor. 11:26).

This seems to be the closest relationship we can have with one another, confined to those of *one mind* in regard to the things related to the Truth as it is in Jesus, and who have become the seed of Abraham by baptism into Christ. It is a sanctified occasion, improved as it were, by repetition from week to week. It is almost beyond our comprehension to understand that Jesus is here—

"For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

'In my Name' is the requirement. Thousands gather together every week to partake of bread and wine, but how many are in Christ's Name? And *are we*? The path that leads to God and Christ is a strait and narrow one, and few find it, Jesus said—Matt. 7: 14. The more any path is travelled, the broader and easier it becomes, and the more side roads and detours there develop, so that the destination becomes more uncertain, and the chance of losing one's way becomes more likely, due to many roads seemingly going in the same direction.

And the certainty of reaching the destination is made less likely by so many fellow-travellers who suggest that the narrow and difficult way, the 'strait' way, is not the right road; but that the wide, smooth, paved road which more people are using (a road paved with untempered mortar—*unscriptural* 'love') is the right road (Proverbs 16:25)—
"There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof is death."

In the last few weeks, we have been saddened by the withdrawal from our fellowship of some who have returned to a group they had left because of error. Also we have reason to rejoice and take courage because others have joined us in various parts, who have come out from the very group the others returned to. Is this condition something new, or has it happened before? Yes, many times.

The Truth never changes. It is a fixed principle, having its foundation in God, existing from the beginning, and continuing on unchanged, with no ending. However, *man's* views of what is Truth changes constantly, almost always diluting truth with error, thereby blinding the eyes and heart. There may be many in different groups who believe quite sincerely in the Truth as stated in the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith. This is good and encouraging—but *is this enough*? Is this all God requires of men, to be acceptable to Him? Is it enough to believe the Truth, and close your eyes to what others believe and teach? Hasn't past history revealed that error tolerated in ecclesial circles leads to a darkening of the Truth, and finally to apostasy?

How many can live with and fellowship false teaching or false conduct without being *contaminated unconsciously* by its infection? 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump'—1 Cor. 5:6. Light can chase away darkness, but when that darkness is in the minds of those who won't allow the light to enter, the light is lost. Bro. Roberts wrote—

"*The narrowness of the Truth is one of the obstacles to its general adoption.* People do not like to be fettered either in doctrine or practice. It is also one of the causes of the active tendency to corruption which has manifested itself among those embracing the Truth from the very day it was apostolically established at Jerusalem.

"It is one of the narrownesses of the Truth that it demands of those who receive it that they contend earnestly for it, even if an angel from heaven oppose it or corrupt it; and that they *maintain it intact and unsullied* among themselves as the *basis of association* among those who profess it, *refusing to walk with* a brother who either disobeys its precepts, or refuses consent to its teaching in vital matters—

"We have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both *do and will do the things we command you*. . . Now we *command* you, brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye *withdraw yourselves* from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:4-6).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye learned, and *avoid them*" (Rom. 16:17).

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed is *partaker of his evil deeds*" (2 John 10-11).

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness . . . from such *withdraw thyself*" (1 Tim.6:3-5).

"This policy is SO CONTRARY TO NATURAL FRIENDLINESS that it is easy to drift away from it, and to invent theories that will relieve us from its unpleasant obligations." —bro. Roberts

What are the 'unpleasant obligations' bro. Roberts mentions? They are that we 'maintain the Truth *intact*'—not just a part of it—as the basis of association among those who profess it, 'refusing to walk with any who disobeys its precepts or refuses to consent to its teaching in vital matters.'

Our whole life after baptism should be a fellowship with Christ, in the *Truth* he preached, in the *obedience* he fulfilled, in the *suffering* he endured, and in the *hope and faith* he possessed. He said—

"The words I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life ... I am the Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh to the Father but by me" (John 6:63; 14:6).

Now, if any man teach any other gospel, or believe teachings contrary to Jesus, how can he have fellowship with God?—

"God is Light, and in Him there is *no darkness at all*" (1 John. 1:5).

Jesus' way of life is illustrated by his words:

"Which of you convinceth (convicteth) me of sin?"

We mix darkness and error with Truth, and offer it as an offering to God, when we permit and condone that which is contrary to Truth, and fellowship it at the breaking of bread service, or at any of our meetings where we presume to worship God.

The Statement of Faith is declared to be the 'basis of our fellowship,' meaning that only those believing the teachings of Scripture therein defined, will be fellowshipped: others will not. By fellowshipping those in error, we become 'partakers of their error'—2 John 10-11, and thereby we offer to God an unclean thing: something foreign to God and Christ—and also we encourage others to continue in error.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the Temple of God with idols?"

"For ye are the Temple of the Living God, as God hath said, I will *dwell in them* , & walk in them: & I will be their God, & they shall be My people.

"Wherefore *come out from among them* , and BE YE SEPARATE, and touch not the unclean thing. And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, & ye shall be My sons & daughters, saith the Lord"

(2 Cor. 6:14-18)

What 'communion,' 'fellowship,' 'concord' (harmony), 'part,' or 'agreement': all suggesting *oneness of mind and purpose* .

Now this religious group to which we belong claim to be the Brethren of Christ: all claiming to be baptized *into the Truth* and into Jesus Christ, the federal Head of the Body. We therefore suppose that this is the Family of God, and Jesus is the Firstborn Son, and we are sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

We have been begotten *by the Word* —James 1: 18; 1 Cor. 4: 15, the good seed of Truth: without this Truth there is no life abiding in us. Therefore those who do not possess the whole Truth have no conception and no birth, so that they are (Eph. 2:12)—

"... without Christ, aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

All such are outside the Body of Christ, and we are to have no fellowship with such, we being 'in the world but not of it': in worship, politics, social activities, etc.

Where do those stand who, having learned the Truth and obeyed the command to be baptized, have fallen into error, contrary to the Truth? Every effort must be made to show them the error of their way or belief. *We cannot judge them in relation to salvation* . Jesus said:

"If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. *The word that I have spoken* , the same shall judge him *in the last day* " (John 12:47-48).

When we know teaching to be false, we must then apply the principle laid down by Paul, ' *What communion hath light with darkness?* ' Error is darkness and ignorance, which alienate from God—Eph. 4: 18. Dare we join in worship and fellowship with those alienated from God?

It is a disbelief in one of the major doctrines of the Scripture to maintain that we are to stay in fellowship with error, or that we must associate with such who do. Bro. Thomas has shown in his writings how the Truth was lost *little by little* , until the Spirit was withdrawn and God spewed them out of His mouth.

Also bro. Roberts has frequently pointed out in his writings the necessity of withdrawing from those teaching error, and also from those who continue to fellowship them. There will always be wolves in sheep's clothing, who parade amongst the flock, carrying the banner of 'love,' while seeking to deceive and devour the simple, falsifying the

Truth with the philosophy of man. And there will always be the unwary who stray from the True Shepherd and are led astray by such. Christ said—

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and *THEY follow ME* . . . A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10: 27, 5).

The only voice of the Good Shepherd available to us today is in the Scriptures, and—

"If any speak not according to the Word, there is NO LIGHT in him" (Isa. 8:20).

Jesus said—

"*Search the Scriptures* . . . for they testify of me" (John 5:39).

The Truth is not found in the writings of those that are in darkness, even though they may express fragments of it. The Truth is found in the Law and the Prophets, in the gospels and epistles. *It is also found in the minds and hearts of those that believe and obey it.*

Jesus warned:

"While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light . . . lest darkness come upon you" (John 12:35-36).

Again:

"I have given them Thy Word . . . Sanctify them *through Thy Truth* . . . that they all may be perfect in one" (John 17:14-23).

Here is the true fellowship:

"There am I in their midst."

"For we are members of his Body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but *I speak concerning Christ and the Ecclesia*" (Eph. 5:30-32). —A.S.J.

Current Events Fulfilling Prophecy

SADAT IN ISRAEL. Sadat's journey was an event of epic proportions—first official visit to Israel by an Arab leader since Israel became a nation. In one stroke, Sadat in effect recognized Israel as a state & Jerusalem as its capital—something not even US would do. Speaking to the Knesset, Sadat explicitly recognized Israel's right to exist in the Mideast: "This corner is yours. I proclaim to the whole world that we accept a lasting & just peace."

But he stuck firmly to his established position, calling for establishment of a Palestinian state & withdrawal of Israel from all lands taken in '67.

In reply, Begin echoed Sadat's hopes for peace; but he too stood by his established position, referring to Israel's 'eternal, undisputed rights.'

According to several sources, Begin had other initiatives in mind, including a jointly-owned nuclear-power plant in Sinai, & economic & technical cooperation. There were hints Israel is willing to return all of Sinai, with some joint presence at Sharm el Sheikh; & give Jordan a large measure of sovereignty in West Bank.

A US spokesman said, "We've taken a huge step beyond all the legalisms," but it was Sadat, not Carter, who had made the big move. Carter has abandoned Kissinger's step-by-step tactics, & sought a comprehensive settlement. That slowed the peace process, gave Arab hardliners increased leverage, & brought Russia back into the Mideast, from which they had been excluded since '72. The Jerusalem summit left Carter on the sidelines, but US took what credit it could.

Outside the Parliament building, Sadat placed a wreath at the memorial that commemorates Israel's war dead; then marched solemnly into the chambers to a standing ovation—a break in tradition at the Knesset, where applause is forbidden.

Addressing them, he referred frequently to the wars that have ravaged the Mideast 4 times in 30 years, & spoke of the barrier that has existed between Israel & the Arabs since creation of the Israel state. He said, "I would like to ask you today, why don't we extend our hands in sincerity so we can pull down this barrier?"

Begin was ecstatic: "The first real sign of progress in 30 years." The summit was a high stakes gamble for both Begin & Sadat. Begin has persistently taken a hardline attitude toward any concessions to the Arabs, but Sadat's bold gesture made it virtually imperative that Begin take some conciliatory step.

Within 24 hours of the announcement, the Arab world was seething with opposition. Libya broke diplomatic relations, & burned down the Egyptian Office in Tripoli. Egyptian embassies were attacked in Damascus, Tripoli, Baghdad, Beirut, & Athens. "Traitor! Traitor!" cursed the Palestinians. Arafat said Sadat had shaken hands with the treacherous Zionist enemy.' But most Egyptians greeted the decision with relief and approval.

The state of no-war, no-peace that has existed since '73 threatens Sadat with disaster. Egypt's economy is in shambles. Its population is growing so fast that per capita output of food is falling. Only sharp cuts in defence spending & massive injections of capital—which can't come before peace—can solve the problems. Sadat needs settlement with Israel more than any other Arab leader.

Cairo is a sprawling slum whose population has soared from 2 to 9 million since '52. Its sewers are overflowing, phones don't work, power failures are frequent, the poor live 10 to a room, & in makeshift huts, & in cemeteries.

After the '73 War, Sadat broke Egypt's alliance with Russia, & set out to convert Egypt into a modern & relatively democratic state; seeking military supplies from US, & disengaging with Israel in the Sinai. He reopened the Canal, encouraged oil exploration, planned new cities, opened door to tourism & foreign investment. But in many ways his good intentions have aggravated the problems.

There are some reasons for hope. Last year, Egypt became a net petroleum exporter, earning over \$300 million. Canal now earning \$500 million a year. New oil wells are being drilled, the Canal deepened to handle giant tankers, & a dozen luxury hotels are going up. Egypt's wealthy neighbours are bankrolling free trade zones & satellite towns along the Canal.

But so far, few benefits have filtered down to the people. Sadat's policies have given rise to a well-heeled class of entrepreneurs whose lavish life-styles anger the majority. Many believe only corruption can account for the wealth.

Till now the army has kept the extremists in check, but there are now rumours of dissension in the ranks, from low pay, lack of progress toward peace, shortage of weapons & prospects of having to crush more riots. Sadat's trip is a risky gamble, but he may not have much to lose. Whether it's an act of courage or of outright desperation is not clear. But he has given a very dramatic signal that he will go all the way, no matter what.

The stones of Jerusalem have seen many astonishing things. The ancient city has been the focus of more attention, has been invested with more significance, & has stirred more hopes than any other spot on earth.

Last week, along the Jordan & the Nile, where there are too many widows & orphans, there was dignified hope. A modern Pharaoh mingled with the descendants of Abraham. Along the Potomac, where there is rarely a sense of history, but much presumption, there was resentment: the journey to Jerusalem was an impertinence, a rebuke to US's 'comprehensive' designs.

Four years after he launched the '73 War, Sadat did something he could have done 1000s of days (& deaths) ago. But it was an act of extraordinary political, physical & moral courage. Many Arab leaders have been deaf to the desires of their people for less war & more health.

There is no basic conflict between Israeli & Egyptian interests, & no impediment to peace except Egypt's unwillingness to make peace.

One reason why Sadat has taken a peaceful step is apprehension about Carter's Mideast policy. That policy is wrong in seeking a 'comprehensive' settlement, & wrong in putting the Palestinian issue at top rather than bottom of the agenda.

Carter's 'comprehensive' settlement policy makes Sadat hostage to Syria's Assad, to Arafat's PLO, & to their supporters in Moscow. Carter's Administration does not enjoy being where it belongs—on the sidelines. It is frustrated because Mideast nations have not marched behind US to a 'comprehensive' Geneva.

But if Egypt & Israel can come to terms, a Geneva Conference may be unnecessary, or at least more manageable & ceremonial. If Egypt & Israel can reach an accommodation, then the Mideast crisis will be virtually over, because without Egypt there can be no major war. (Nwk 11:28)

* * *

Never before had the Mideast witnessed such a moment: first visit ever of an Arab leader to the Jewish state. Israelis could scarcely believe what they were seeing. Egypt has been an implacable enemy in 4 bitter Arab-Israel wars.

Cairo's leading newspaper, *Al Ahrām*, judged the meeting of Sadat & Begin—a devout Muslim & a deeply religious Jew—to be most important of its kind since the Prophet Mohammed made a covenant with the Jews of Medina 1355 years ago.

Sadat is making a historic, statesmanlike gamble that may well change the future of the Mideast—for better or for worse. And in accepting Sadat's overtures to direct contacts, Begin has shown an initiative & enterprise far different from the dogged, entrenched positions taken by the Labour govts. that preceded his.

No one in Israel was more elated than Begin, who had responded to Sadat's statesmanlike proposal with a statesmanlike acceptance. Like Sadat, he was determined to get the peace process moving again.

Enthusiasm for the event filled Israel. The Tel Aviv daily *Ma'ariv* splashed a banner headline across its front page in Hebrew & Arabic: WELCOME, PRESIDENT SADAT. Israel radio played Egyptian music. Jerusalem was decked with Egyptian flags.

Most Arab reaction was negative, abusive & violent. Libya broke relations & demanded Egypt's ouster from the Arab League. Iraq called it a catastrophe, & Sadat a traitor. Syria declared a day of mourning. Three moderate Arab states—Tunisia, Morocco & Sudan—endorsed the mission.

Egypt's Foreign Minister Fahmy resigned in protest, as did Egypt's 2nd ranking diplomat Riad. The Army backed Sadat, also the 3 opposition parties.

Egypt is an economic cripple, with debts of \$13 billion, dependent on subsidies of \$5½ billion from US, Saudi Arabia & other Arab oil states.

As the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* put it, there was now "a gap in the wall of Arab hostility," thanks to the imagination & courage of Sadat. (Tm 11:28)

* * *

Sadat's decision to appear before Israel's Knesset transformed, almost overnight, the long-range prospects for peace in Mideast. The Arab radicals were put on notice that Sadat will not again allow Egypt to be dragged into war. Experts agree Sadat succeeded in changing entirely the dynamics of the Mideast conflict.

Why is such far-reaching significance attached to this single event: the first visit by an Arab leader to Israel? Most importantly: its symbolism & its psychological impact. A visit by Sadat represented unequivocal acceptance of the Jewish state by the leader of the most powerful country in the Arab world. Since the establishment of Israel, Arabs have refused to recognize its legitimacy.

Egypt, as the only Arab country strong enough to be a decisive threat to Israel, holds the key to any future war involving the old Mideast adversaries. Should Egypt reach an understanding with Israel, danger of another war would be fairly remote. That's why Israel for years has considered a separate peace with Egypt, & why the radical Arab states like Syria have feared it.

An impoverished Egypt yearns desperately for relief from the financial burden of endless struggle with Israel. Sadat sees a settlement with Israel as Egypt's only hope of coming to grips with its economic distress, & getting foreign capital.

Settlement of issues between Egypt & Israel appear readily attainable: Israel does not regard Sinai as strategically vital. Israel-Egypt agreement is a distinct possibility as a consequence of Sadat's dramatic gesture.

Sadat & Begin have the ability & the power to forge Mideast peace. Sadat's power base is Egypt's leadership in the Arab world—with ½ its population & its strongest military force. Begin's power base rests on Israel's military might—by all odds the most powerful in the region—its cohesiveness in time of war, & its unique relationship with US.

At home, Sadat is burdened with a shaky economy, political unrest, & angry people who have rioted over high food prices. Begin's problems at home are similar: soaring inflation & trade difficulties. In addition, Jewish immigration to Israel is declining. People in Israel believe that Begin is strong; that he knows what he is doing, & that he has won Carter over to his position. (USN 11:28)

THIS is the first decent & sensible thing an Arab has done in relation to Israel since it was established in '48. The Arabs themselves created the so-called 'Palestinian problem' by viciously attacking the newborn state in '48, directing the Arab inhabitants to get out of the way temporarily so the 6 attacking Arab armies could annihilate the Jews. It didn't work out exactly as they planned: the Palestinians who believed them & left are still waiting.

After '48, the Arabs used the Arab-created Palestinian problem as an excuse for further attempts to annihilate Israel. In the '67 Arab attack, Israel destroyed the Arab forces & sensibly took territory from the attackers to strengthen her defences against further attacks.

Since '67, the Arabs have added the 'Arab territory' excuse to the 'Palestinian' excuse: conveniently ignoring the fact that it was their own deliberate, unprovoked, murderous attacks on Israel that created both 'problems.'

Sadat, under the tremendous pressure of economic & social problems at home, seems at last to have seen the light, thru all the fogs of Arab hatred of Israel. It is still the same Sadat who treacherously attacked Israel during their holy Yom Kippur celebration in '73. He is still concerned solely with Sadat's & Egypt's interests. He has not suddenly improved in character. He would just as treacherously attack Israel again if he felt it would further his & Egypt's interests. But he seems to have finally wisely decided it wouldn't.

In the past the Arabs, in their childishness, have always insisted, in negotiations, on going thru the stupid mummery that Israel does not exist, always talking to her thru a 3rd party. One Arab leader has now at last refreshingly cast aside that juvenile pantomime.

It is a tremendous step in the right direction. Israel & Egypt must be in the same camp in the end: the camp of the King of the South. Egypt must break completely with the anti-Israel Arab states. His action has brought out in much more vivid relief the growing cleavage between the King of the North Arabs (Syria, Libya & Iraq) & the King of the South Arabs (Egypt, Arabia & Jordan). The latter 2 made mild, token protests; the pro-Gog Arabs burned Egyptian buildings & screamed for Sadat's overthrow and/or assassination.

The advent of Begin has changed the scene tremendously. He is the first real Israel leader since Ben-Gurion. Occasionally, striking & brilliant statesmen arise from the common run of nondescript politicians in a country, when God has a work to be done. We rejoice to see the plan unfolding.

The absence of statesmen, or anyone who knows what they are doing, among US & British politicians is gradually opening the way for the whirlwind descent of Russia into the Mideast, for which she is feverishly preparing with every ounce of her strength. We have just again been reading Joel in our Daily Readings. The descent of the Northern Army will, in scope & power & destructive effect, make Hitler's blitz-krieg panzers seem like ox-carts.

SOMALIA BOOTS OUT THE RUSSIANS. Last week, Somalia renounced its 3- yr.-old friendship pact with Russia, told Russia to vacate the Soviet-built naval base at Berbera, & ordered all Russians out of country on week's notice, except a skeleton embassy staff of 7. They also broke diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Russia had been aiding Somalia since early '60s, making it one of best armed nations in Africa, with MIG jets & tanks. Till mid'70s, Ethiopia under Selassie received substantial aid & arms from US. But after leftist coup in '74, relations with US cooled. Early this yr. Ethiopia ousted US advisors, & Russia saw chance to establish a presence in Ethiopia which is almost 10 times as populous as Somalia. But Ethiopia is an extremely fragile ally, led by an unstable govt., & fighting wars in Eritrea & Ogaden.

For the moment, Ogaden war is a stalemate, with Somalia holding most of the territory; but when heavy Soviet equipment already in Ethiopia begins to show up on the battlefield, the tide could well turn. (Tm 11:28)

* * *

Over 3000 Russians pulled out of Somalia in undignified haste last week. In dramatic turn of events, Somalia broke friendship treaty, expelled Russian advisors, & closed 2 vital naval bases. Somalia's about-face may signal major change in strategic balance on Horn of Africa. Till few months ago, Russia dominated the Horn, which controls both the gates to the Red Sea & the mouth of the oil rich Persian Gulf. Russia had invested heavily in Berbera, building a communications station, a missile-loading facility & a 13,000-ft. airstrip.

Russia hopes to gain major new foothold in Ethiopia, but Ethiopia seems to be losing its battle with secessionists in Eritrea, & Mengistu runs a helter-skelter regime. He has already executed one of his own heads of state, & last week he executed his second in command.

Unless their foreign friends move quickly, Somalis could soon be in serious trouble on the battlefield. Russia will not take this lying down. Her build up of Ethiopia's arms moves steadily ahead. Somalia fears an armoured thrust across northern Somalia, which could carry the Ethiopians & their Russian allies right back to Berbera. (Nwk 11:28)

* * *

Russia, by playing Ethiopia against Somalia, has exposed huge gap between its professed generosity toward '3rd World' nations & its actual self-serving, callous policies. They set their plan in motion earlier this year when Ethiopia turned its back on US. Immediately Russia began to pour in tanks, MIG fighters & other arms. For months, Russia walked an African tightrope, hoping to retain bases in Somalia even while shipping huge arms supplies to Somalia's archrival.

Somalia wants US to honour its promise to provide arms—an offer US made & then withdrew. In addition to a large part of Ethiopia, Somalia claims Djibouti & a big hunk of Kenya, one of US's strongest supporters in Africa.

Moscow now seems irrevocably committed to shoring up Mengistu regime: could be formidable task. Ethiopia seems fighting losing battle in Eritrea, & has lost most of Ogaden to Somalia. Ruling junta constantly torn by power struggles & has been decimated by series of purges & murders.

But time could be running out for Somalia. Ogaden campaign is bogged down. Early gains could be erased & Somalia itself threatened by an Ethiopian-Cuban assault using Russian weapons.

Russia still holds its hard-headed assessment that Ethiopia can better serve Russian ambitions in Africa than Somalia. They believe potential gains worth the gamble, & may well still come out ahead.

Ethiopia's one of largest nations in Africa, with 30 million people & wealth of agricultural & mineral resources. It is better placed than Somalia. Its capital is headquarters for Organization of African Unity.

More importantly, leaders are transforming it into a genuinely revolutionary Marxist state—something that could never happen in tradition-bound Somalia.

With Soviet base rights on Red Sea coast dependent on Ethiopia's ability to crush the Eritrean rebellion, Russia may play a more direct role in Eritrea. Experts foresee Russia setting up a proper Communist organization in Ethiopia, taking control of internal security, & helping Mengistu weed out opposition to his rule. (USN 11:28)

WE may well be witnessing the answer to the question as to just what territory is the 'Ethiopia' (Cush) that plays a decisive role in the descent of Gog (Ezek. 38:5; Dan. 11:43). Some feel Russia's ouster from Somalia is a setback, but it seems more likely to be a step in a well-calculated gamble that could pay off big for Russia. Moscow seems to have well sized up Carter's hesitant & fearful African policy, & little seems to stand in their

way of making Ethiopia a major Russian bastion. Somalia is no match for Ethiopia in the long run, & a quick blitz there when Russia is ready could very suddenly reverse the picture.

As to the Ethiopia leadership's cutthroat inter-squabbling & purges, this is Russia's style to a T: all her present leaders clawed to the top this way. They will be kindred spirits: this is how a ruthless, tight-knit Red dictatorship is established. This is the game Russia knows best.

Plenty of modern Russian arms, tanks & planes—already flowing in—and a few 1000 Cuban troops—could soon solve Ethiopia's present problems. The thought of Russia back in Berbera in a few months is not as far-fetched as it seems. US does not seem to have the nerve to try to stop Russia, & who else has the slightest chance of doing so? We know that a land called 'Cush' must be a prominent ally of Gog. Certainly present events seem to be working wonderfully in that direction. We watch with very great interest. Ethiopia seems ideally suited for Russia's purpose, & to have a leadership with enough bloodthirsty ruthlessness to carry out the widespread purges required to lay an impregnable Communist foundation. US's long support of the corrupt & inhumanly oppressive & callous Selassie regime well prepared the ground. The masses seem to support the present government.

ANOTHER SOVIET GRAIN STING. How the Russians again outfoxed the experts. In the celebrated 'Great Grain Robbery' of '72, Russian agents bought up whole shipments of US wheat, managing not only to secure it at bargain prices but also to get US to foot part of the bill thru the farm subsidy program. Now much to US's embarrassment, the Russians have stung again.

The sting came to light when Brezhnev announced the '77 harvest would be only 194 million tons. All summer, US agricultural experts & the CIA were forecasting a fat 215 million tons. Moscow for months spoke of possible record harvests, & showed visiting US inspectors sturdy fields that were actually specially chosen exceptions to the general poor harvest.

More embarrassing still, it turns out Russia has already made most of its necessary purchases, skilfully skirting the provisions of the US-Soviet agreement about revealing their purchases, & chartering ships to move it at lowest possible cost. By the time Brezhnev revealed the poor harvest, Russia had already secretly purchased 18 to 20 million tons.

After the '72 sting, US got Moscow to agree to report any 'official' purchases in US over 8 million tons (they have guaranteed to buy 6 million tons every yr.). So how was US caught by surprise? Russia secretly purchased thru European subsidiaries of US dealers & European firms with offices in US. This was within the letter of the agreement which only covered 'official' purchases in US. (Tm 11:28)

THIS would hardly be newsworthy as a Sign of the Times, except for how vividly it illustrates the contrast between bungling US 'democracy' & the cool efficiency of the Russian dictatorship. More & more in US, it just seems that no one is in charge of the store, or has any conception of what is happening. Matters of urgent national interest, as energy, instead of being promptly & resolutely dealt with in the broad national interest, are endlessly stalled & torn to pieces by small faction-minded legislators under control & pressure of vested interests. Certainly it isn't that the Russians are any cleverer, but their system is tight-knit & unified, in contrast with the every-man-for-himself confusion and corruption of US.

Certainly it is a Sign in that we can see the hand of God behind it all, working out His foretold purpose in such natural-appearing ways. US must stumble on its drunken course of individual selfishness & self-interest-totally blinded by its crude obsession with pleasure, status, & luxury, while Russia so obviously girds & prepares to seize world power.

GREEN LIGHT FOR RUSSIA IN AFRICA. Cuban military build up in Africa climbing to alarming levels: now over 27,000. In Angola alone there are 19,000 troops & 4000 advisers. Cuban troops bolster the Marxist regime in Ethiopia. Cuban technicians, aides & advisers are in 13 other African states. If race war erupts in southern Africa, Cuban role could be crucial.

Russia supplies the arms and uses Cubans as surrogates to advance Russian goals. And US? No direct intervention: Carter's firm on that. (USN 11:28).

CARTER'S voluntary promise not to intervene is all Russia needs. Once she had openly & brazenly put massive arms & Cuban troops into Angola, to establish a minority Red govt. by force; & found US hamstrung by Congress-Administration feuding, & still timid from its humiliating defeat in Vietnam, she has been increasingly bold. But for Carter to gratuitously guarantee her a free hand seems going unnecessarily far.

"Make no provision for the flesh." We must never do what we 'want': that is childish immaturity. We must do what is right and best: that is happiness and peace.

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4. Luke	11. Hagar	18. Josiah	25. Rachel	34. Michael	43. Barabbas	52. Tubal-cain
5. Jubal	12. Julius	19. Lysias	26. Gideon	35. Nimrod	44. Gamaliel	53. John Mark
6. Noah	13. Philip	20. Simon	27. Rehum	36. Goliath	45. Tertullus	54. Mithredath
7. Cush	14. Zenas	21. Asaph	28. Shebna	37. Tiberius	46. Zaccheus	55. Nicodemus
			29. Balaam	38. Candace	47. Dionysius	56. Ahithophel
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