

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 82

September 1986

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Reader Friends, Warm Greetings in Jesus Name.

We are appreciative of the letters and messages we receive from you from time to time which are a source of cheer and encouragement as we travel along the road to the Kingdom of God. As far as we know there is no special news to report regarding the brethren and sisters, but we pray for the welfare of all especially those who are experiencing bereavement or any of the many trials of this life, that they will receive strength to overcome.

A short time ago the first meeting for many years took place between Russian and Israeli government officials, it turned out to be at cross purposes; the Russian interest was to do with their considerable interests in the Holy Land, while that of the Israelis was concerning the thousands of Jews who are waiting to return to Israel. However we understand the Russians were not prepared to discuss this matter. The meeting lasted for only 90 minutes with no progress other than that it was agreed to meet again at a later date. My thoughts went to Mr. F.G. Jannaway, a well-known Christadelphian of a past generation who travelled in and wrote extensively during the first half of the present century in Palestine, as it was then called from the point of view of a Bible Student. In his book Palestine and the World, written I believe during the 20's (on pages 182/185 is listed a number of Russian properties that was known then as 'The Russian Quadrangle' and 'The Belvedere Tower' the latter commonly known as The Russian Tower today which they still have, the top of which is 560 feet above Jerusalem, from which they can signal to ships in Mediterranean. Indeed a most commanding site for sentry duty.

It is not for man to resolve the issue of Israel's full return to the land of their forefathers. We know in the purpose of God they will ultimately return, but at His appointed time as we see in Isaiah 45:5,6. In this issue is the final instalment on "Baptism a mislaid meaning" by Bro. E. Brady. "Further thoughts on the book of Joshua" by Bro. Leo. Dreifuss. "A brief consideration of the book of Ruth" compiled from notes of the late bro, J. Hembling. "Thoughts by the way concerning Egypt".

We extend our Sincere Love to all in the Masters Service. Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

continued from August:

Baptism - A Mislaid Meaning

We are all well aware that at this time the Doctor was occupied with the realisation that the true hope was of a future Kingdom on earth and he was unaware that his beliefs were defective in other directions as well; that does not in any way alter the effect of the facts - that he had "been immersed for

remission of sins and suddenly realised that he was yet un-baptised. We present the problem to the Editor of "The Christadelphian."

The case against him is still further strengthened when we consider the circumstances of Dr. Thomas's rebaptism: "Accordingly the Doctor asked a friend to accompany him to the water and there addressed him in the following terms: "I desire you to immerse me. All I ask of you is to put me under the water, and pronounce the following words over me - 'Upon confession of your faith in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. I baptise you into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,' I don't ask you for any prayer or any ceremony etc." The observant reader will notice that he did not ask for any remission of sins either. A curious set of coincidences altogether, if John Carter is to be believed. His first baptism specifically for remission of sins - invalid. His second, the baptism in which Dr. Thomas placed his faith no mention of sins at all.

It will be easy to say that the fact was taken for granted, and as we have said we accept that remission of sins is involved. What we affirm, and what Dr. Thomas proves by both his words and his practice, is that what really matters in baptism is the legal aspect. It is an act of faith recognising a Divinely appointed order in which man is disqualified from approaching God because of sin. This sin was Adam's - the sin of the world. No one is held guilty because of it - but for the purpose of Salvation - note that - for Salvation, not for punishment or any evil purpose whatever, but for Salvation, all men are included under Adam, and his one sin as the type and representative of theirs.

The effect is that all men in the natural order are excluded from the Tree of Life, cut off from God, and only to be restored to the relationship enjoyed by Adam before he sinned by dying in symbol, in baptism, the death he incurred.

We may perhaps clinch the point and again show the conflict between current Christadelphianism and the former teaching with a quotation from "Christendom Astray," by Robert Roberts (p. 286). "They (the Apostles) recognised in it (baptism) a constitutional transition from one relationship to another - a representative putting off of the old man, or Adamic nature, and a putting on of the new man, or Christ. Who is the covering name, in which, when the naked son of Adam is invested, he stands clothed before Jehovah, and is approved in His sight." This is another Christadelphian work which will need expurgation in the light (?) of the new apostasy. Can the reader find any reference to remission of sins in this extract as the sole or even one of the significances of baptism? Indeed the whole of Lecture 17, from which it comes, is as complete and conclusive a contradiction of John Carter as will ever be written.

The explanation is that "Christendom Astray" was written - or rather the lectures given - while Robert Roberts was a youth in his 20's, and under the early influence of the Doctor's teaching. In his book "Echoes of Past Controversies" H. Fry suggests that as the years passed the roles were reversed and Robert Roberts influenced Dr. Thomas. It seems very likely that this might account for the prominence of the doctrine of sinful flesh in his later works, whereas it is hardly found in his early writing.

In this connection it is worth recording that the book just mentioned is a painstaking (but vain) effort to iron out the many contradictions in and between various Christadelphian works. Its author was a personal friend of our beloved Bro. Bayliss, who was re-baptised at over 70 years of age after confessing to the writer that "he realised that he had been for over 50 years a Robertsite." He asked Bro. Fry, shortly before he died, if he had changed his ideas at all in the years since writing "Echoes of Past Controversies," and he replied that he had come to realise that the so called Clean Flesh Heretics were right and Christadelphians wrong in their respective views on the nature of man; but he asked Bro. Bayliss to respect his confidence as he was too old and tired for controversy."

Quoting further from "Christendom Astray"; Robert Roberts says (p. 287): "God has required all believers of this truth to be immersed, as a means of transferring them from the domination of the old mortal Adam to the life giving connection with the second Adam, the Lord from heaven."

How foolish is the illustration given by John Carter on p. 296 in view of this. He says Bible teaching would be accurately illustrated by a large circle representing all mankind in Adam, with a

smaller circle inside it representing those in Christ, but still in Adam. Both Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts knew better than this; that people cannot be under two federal heads at the same time; hence he says believers are transferred from one to the other when they are baptised. Thos Williams was nearer the truth in his idea of two circles side by side, one containing all in Adam and the other all in Christ, but such a figure makes no allowance for the fact that the vast majority of mankind have no relationship one way or the other because of their ignorance. The truth is that if we take a large circle to represent the whole of mankind then in it must be two smaller circles, one representing those in Adam by enlightenment and the other those who have transferred themselves into Christ by belief and obedience. All in the big circle are descended from Adam and are natural corruptible creatures but they are irresponsible and will eventually perish like the animal creation. All in that big circle who hear the word are placed by it in the Adamic circle and come under the law of the sin and the death (not natural death as the wages of sin).

If they remain in Adam, instead of accepting the gracious invitation of God, they will eventually be brought forth to suffer the penalty in the second death. If they accept the offer of Salvation they acknowledge the fact and pass through that death in the symbol of baptism, thereby transferring themselves into Christ, whence if they remain faithful, asking for and receiving forgiveness for their sins day by day, they are assured of an incorruptible resurrection.

If a renegade may venture to proffer advice to one in the position of John Carter, it would be that he should carefully consider the wisdom of ceasing to use in the baptismal formula the words “for the remission of sins” and revert to that used by Dr. Thomas and early Christadelphians wherein the emphasis is on the re-birth in Christ. The introduction of those words is a recent innovation which reflects the trend of thought and the gradual loss of the truth. Many young people who are baptised are not conscious of – and probably not guilty of - a load of personal sins, and therefore baptism for remission of sins is unlikely to evoke any very strong mental impression. On the other hand, the realisation of the fact of legal alienation which can only be reversed by an act of faith is a matter of practical appeal to everyone. If the words “for the remission of sins” were omitted and attention concentrated on the entrance into Christ it might be that those involved would be more impressed with the importance of living a life in conformity with their changed status.

We confess without shame and with a deep sense of thankfulness that we believe that Jesus was our substitute and that He bore in our stead the wages of sin. All that is required of us is that we pass through that death in the figure of baptism, thus acknowledging that by sin we are alienated from God and that in strict justice death would be our due reward. Then when we think of Jesus nailed to the Cross, forsaken and stricken, suffering death in its most dreadful form for our sakes’ alone, as our Redeemer, we can truly and thankfully acknowledge His loving self-sacrifice.

E. Brady.

Further thoughts on the Book of Joshua.

There are many events in this book which bear a close parallel to the time when Israel will enter the Holy Land for the second time, under the leadership of Christ. There are more incidents however, where though we cannot see an exact parallel; there is nevertheless something we can learn from them for our exhortation.

There is the incident when the Gibeonites, by acting deceitfully, pretending to have come from a far country, entered into a covenant with Joshua and the elders of Israel. Although they acted deceitfully, it cannot have been much to the credit of Joshua and the elders. They apparently had not consulted God in this matter. It seems they suspected something like this, for they said, “Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you”? They knew it was against God’s express command to make a covenant with the inhabitants of Canaan. And there was the Ark in the midst of the camp, the proper

means for speaking with God. Only previous to that, in the calamity over Achan's trespass, they had prayed before the ark. But now that no actual emergency threatened, they had neglected it. And so this covenant was made. Now once the covenant was made, we read that it had to stand. The fact that they found out afterwards who they really were was no excuse for breaking their word. The princes said: "We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel: now therefore we cannot touch them." So it seems that according to the statutes then in force, a covenant before God was binding, even though facts came to light afterwards which, had they known before, the covenant would not have been concluded. Yes, God is against covenant breaking in any form, even though in this case it violated one of God's earlier commandments not to enter into a covenant with the inhabitants of the country. These Gibeonites were completely ignorant of God, and it must be admitted they acted very subtly. As soon as the men of Israel suspected that they dwelt amongst them, they began to tell their story of having come from far, and so on. Probably the elders of Israel were so taken completely by surprise and so impressed by their story, that they made the league before realising their mistake. In one sense the Gibeonites won the day. Their object to escape with their lives and not to have their city destroyed was admittedly achieved. It is another example of the children of this world being in their generation wiser than the children of light.

We next consider the day when the sun and moon stood still. This was, I think the most drastic means in the whole Bible history from creation to the return of Christ, by which God intervened and turned the laws of nature to His own purpose. This was the most decisive battle of Joshua's campaign. It was against a confederacy of nations. Once this confederacy was broken up through defeat in the field, the rest was just a matter of dealing with isolated pockets of resistance. But on the outcome of this battle depended whether or not the Israelites were ever to be able to settle as an organised nation. Hence the reason for God's unusual intervention. It was an occasion of unusually mighty and awe inspiring manner. Yes, how privileged were those children of Israel to see that act of God: He directed the whole "battle for them. First He discomfited the enemy with hail, and then this tremendous miracle. It must have put the fear of their lives into those people in the enemy camp, to see the sun and the moon stand still, and to see the day drag on and on, leaving them no hiding place, no respite. Now at the return of Christ, we are told "by the prophet Zechariah, somewhat similar events will take place. Again a decisive battle will have to be fought against an even stronger confederacy of nations. Those who shout "Let us break their bands asunder, let us-cast their cords from us" will encamp against the antitypical Joshua, even Jesus and His saints. Again on its outcome much will depend: this time whether or not God is ruling the world. And again there will be a spectacular divine intervention, spreading fear and panic into the enemy camp. This time it will be a mighty earthquake, so mighty that there will be changes in the landscape of Palestine, when the Mount of Olives will split in two. As in Joshua's campaign, it will be an unusual day, and again at evening it will be light. Zech. 14:7. "But it shall be one day which shall be known to the lord, not day, nor night: "but it shall come to pass, that at evening it shall be light." What a dreadful experience this must be to enemies of the Lord: the hardships of the war, the heat of the battle, then that awful earth-quake, and at the end of the day, when everybody feels ready for a good nights sleep, probably conscience stricken and wanting to hide from the Lord, the fact will be brought home to them that there is no hiding. They will then be learning the lesson which Adam, Eve and Cain and others learned when they sinned and wanted to hide from God. But there will be no hiding. And they may not even have the means of escape which the sinners of all previous generations had: the blood of Christ. It will be too late then, and they will learn what the Psalmist told them some 3000 years ago (Psalm 2) "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Next comes to mind the incident when the two and a half tribes which had their inheritance on the other side of Jordan departed and built an altar as a witness for future generations. This gave rise to a misunderstanding, the sort of misunderstandings that will arise with the limited human knowledge and judgment. Had the children of Israel been hasty, it might have led to war and bloodshed. Perhaps they had learned a lesson from their earlier experience with the Gibeonites. However this matter was cleared up to the satisfaction of all sides.

Finally, let us consider Joshua's last admonition to the Israelites before his death. And there is this statement: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." This, my dear brethren and sisters, is the question which everybody on the day of his conversion has to answer for himself. We all had to make this choice one

day in our lives: whether to be of the world and to serve “The god of this world”, the lust of the flesh, doing our own will, or whether to serve the Lord, doing His will. Joshua did not try to force the children of Israel into it. He did not go beyond persuasion. God does not want men to serve him out of fear, or in any way just because it is a good custom, or because our parents do it. He wants men and women to serve him as a result of their own decision, every time. It is not an easy decision, and it should not be made hastily. It is a step for life, for there is no drawing back. So Joshua, trying the children of Israel gave them a chance to contract out, or at any rate pretended to do so: he tried them hard that day. First he said: “If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve.” And they chose the Lord. So to “be quite sure that their answer came not just on the spur of the moment, he said: “You cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins...” But again, the people made the right decision. Nay, but we will serve the Lord.” The people had made their decision. If only they had kept it with that same determination! “And Joshua said unto the people, ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, we are witnesses.” “Ye are witnesses against yourselves.” Yes, it was their decision and their responsibility from that day on. And when we made our decision, it was and is, our responsibility. If it was genuine it was not to please some friend, but only with the sole purpose of pleasing God. And it will be our responsibility to the end of our probation. Now Joshua’s first admonition after they had made their decision was: “Now therefore put away the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel.” And this admonition never loses its force or its necessity to ourselves. “Put away the strange gods.” We are not likely in our day to commit actual idolatry, as this is not the present fashion in our part of the world. But we all have to be on our guard, lest we are enticed to serve the ‘god of this world’ in one form or another, lest we set our hearts on worldly possessions and worldly wisdom or prefer the esteem of friends to the approval of God. Let us be aware that in course of time, our decision to serve the Lord sticks in our minds as if we made it but yesterday. So many things of this world lose their thrill once the newness of them has worn off. Let us ensure that this never happens to what we have promised on the day we were converted. We cannot afford to let it wear off. This happened to Israel after the flesh. They forgot the Lord all too often. And unfortunately, also too often, we hear of people in our day falling away after having made a good start in the Lord.

But let us keep constantly before us Joshua’s warning. It is good advice and if only observed, it provides the answer to all temptations and trials, and all forms of discouragement which we get from time to time. It is this: “Incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel”, Joshua chapter 24 v 25.

Brother Leo Dreifuss

Having the same Spirit of Faith, according as it is written I believe, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe and therefore speak. ii cor. 4:15

Free to speak, but yet a slave.
 Shame upon thee, craven spirit;
 Is it manly, just, or brave,
 If a truth have shone within thee
 To conceal the Light it gave?
 Captive of the world’s opinion -
 Free to speak - but yet a slave,

Speak thy thoughts, if thou believ’st it,
 Let it jostle whom it may,
 E’en although the foolish scorn it,
 Or the - obstinate gainsay,
 Every seed that grows tomorrow,
 Lies beneath a clod today.

All convictions should be valiant -
 Tell the truth - if Truth it be;
 Never seek to stem its current;
 Though it like rivers reach the sea
 It will fit the widening circle
 Of Eternal Verity.

If our Sires, the noble-hearted,
 Pioneers of things to come,
 Had like thee, been meek and timid,
 Traitors to themselves and dumb -
 Where would be out present knowledge,
 Where the hoped Millennium?

A Brief Consideration of the Book of Ruth.

Taken from the Scriptures and scanty external writings and the names of those mentioned.

In the first two verses of the book we are introduced to the family and their surroundings and the members of that family. Eli Melech whose name means 'God is King' was I feel a God fearing man, and like Job, had been blessed by God; some writers feel he was the head of a family or clan in the area in which he resided, Beth-lehem-judah, or as we are told in the T.B.S.E. Ephrath, was an area of Bethlehem just as today Kings Oak is a part of Birmingham. The name of his wife was NAOMI (my sweetness or delight) who no doubt was kindly, helpful, joyful, making home the centre of Godly influences. They had been blessed with two male children; every Jewish father and mother looked forward to the day when their Messiah should be born. They lived in a very fruitful area about 2500 ft. above sea level with a typical Mediterranean climate, Bethlehem was surrounded by an area of fig and olive orchards and vineyards. MAHLON the elder sons name we understand meant (a sick person; or sickness) while his younger brother CHILION according to the Westminster Bible Dictionary meant; wasting away. The family lived together in their native area described by one writer as 'A house of Bread: A place of good food.' But sadly a famine in the land alters everything, so reduced in circumstances and need they seek to sojourn in another country for life's necessities, and to where did Elimelech and his family go? They went to MOAB. Concerning Moab we read in Deut. 25 v 6 the instructions to the children of Israel "Thou shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever." How Elimelech and Naomi felt having to go into Moab we are not told. It must have weighed heavy upon them as God fearing persons, how they must have hesitated before moving. But is there evil in a city and God has not done it' (national sins). So the family move into Moab, but sadly (under the hand of God) the curse seems to follow them. Ruth 1 v 5. "And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left and her two sons." Here was Naomi in a strange land with two sickly sons, how was she to fare? God never yet forsook the man or woman who trusted Him. Provision in the long term was provided for Naomi, but not in just a material manner, for throughout the book of Ruth we trace the hand of God. Mahlon and Chillion in due time married," they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah meaning (neck or stubbornness) and Ruth (meaning uncertain, perhaps comely but when convinced 'constant Filial love') how true was this latter description seen in her life, yet again to her in a strange land. Still however a curse appears to follow; with sadness must Naomi have in her heart thought upon such words as those recorded in Numbers 25:1-6 as she saw how the surrounding people went on in worship.

By her kindly and motherly instincts she seeks to win her daughters in law. By precept and example to worship the God of Israel. We read in Ruth 1:20 "...call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very... bitterly with me." This was when she had returned to her native land Naomi said this. But what was this "bitterness? We see it recorded in v 5 of this same chapter, for now, not only had Elimelech died, "but her two sons also were now at rest, and we assumed buried in a strange land, having heard that things were now improved in Bethlehem, why should she remain in a strange land, her two daughters-in-law could stay in their native land tend their husbands graves and may "be marry again, and remain in the land." No doubt having considered it well and asked for God's guidance Naomi prepares to leave Moab and return to her homeland. Yes and after all her careful work it would at first appear that she was about to leave her two daughters in law as we see in v. 8 of chapter 1 "And Naomi said to her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.' No doubt the two girls had tended with loving care their husbands while they lived; and also mother-in-law. What a difference is seen in many cases when distress and sorrow comes to a family, it is then that deep down feelings come to the fore. Naomi continued "The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband," but only one did Ruth. Was this in any way prophetic? Orpah by another writer describes as 'Youthful and fresh, compared her to a hind of the field, kissed her mother-in-law but was loathe to part from her national environment' and so returned. Ruth also kissed her mother in-law but it seems she hesitated, for she clave unto her despite the fact that her sister had returned and gone back to her peoples gods meant nothing to Ruth. How the heart of Naomi must have beat at speed with the comfort and reward God had given her for faithful labour and teaching, as she listened to Ruth's words as fully seen in ch, 2 v 16-18, especially, "and thy God my God." Naomi saw Ruth meant what she said and was determined to go with her, then she left

speaking unto her. So she returned to her homeland empty but hopeful, no material possessions but no doubt full of hope with Ruth at her side. Following their return to Bethlehem, the story is well known, from early Sunday School days and today has its lessons for us, in what appears the most unusual circumstances, the Word and Purpose of God prevails. Ruth was requiting the love spent on her and proved a friend indeed. It was not sentimental, but real steadfast love (faith begotten of love). Faith without works is dead. "If ye love me keep my commandments". Ruth became the husband of Boaz whose name means (Lord of Strength), the result of this union was the restoration of lands in accordance with Mosaic order, and the birth of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. There are many instances in the scriptures where late in life God gives his servants a satisfaction which they have lacked earlier, as Jacob being "brought down to Egypt and seeing Joseph whom he had never thought to see again in this life. In this book of Ruth having nursed her own two sons seeing them die without child, had the joy of being able to nurse the son of Ruth, as expressed in chapter 4 v14 and 15 when the women said to Naomi "And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons..." This son had a direct connection with the line of Mary or Joseph as we can see in the records of Matthew and Luke. David and David's greater son.

Finally let us look at just a few lessons we can see or learn from the Book of Ruth.

1. God does not always work through prosperity even though He may so do at times and through adversity: Job: Abraham: Jacob: David: Solomon.

2. We may judge by appearances as did Job's three friends. But in matters concerning God, He judges the motive of a heart.

3. God can bring good out of evil, as the Moabitish marriage in Ruth, but not when His laws are deliberately ignored or disobeyed. As in the manner of the latter part of Romans ch. 3 v. 8 Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

4. Truth by example and precept honestly taught, brings its reward when acting upon right material, e.g. Ruth rather than Orpah.

5. Blessings of God are not restricted to the one concerned: Ruth, Naomi, Boaz, but in this case to generations yet unborn, in Christ.

6. The curse of Deuteronomy 28 having driven the Jews to every corner of the earth God still provides Palestine with abundant rainfall and fruitfulness. The call will yet come to Israel. Psalm 45 v 10 and Isaiah chapter 55.

Compiled from brief notes written in 1926 by bro. Hembling now sleeping in Jesus.

A Reason for the Hope that is in you. Jesus Christ and Him Crucified,

I Peter 5:15

I Corinthians 2:2

When considering matters of belief and religion whether verbally or written a common excuse for inaction or non committal is:- "Other commitments" -

COMMIT. Having something ENTRUSTED: CONSIGNED: PLEDGED to our care,

COMMITMENT. A rule or article of belief which RESTRICTS our FREEDOM of EXPRESSION or ACTION.

- Are you restricted by a Statement of Faith as in the Christadelphian Body?
- by the 59 Articles of the Established Protestant Church of England ?
- by Papal Bulls, and Cardinals' pronouncements in the Church of Rome ?

Remember the words of Timothy in his second epistle chapter 2 verse 9, "...but the word of God is not bound".

Thoughts by the way.

Egypt

Many countries and their natural features are mentioned in the Scriptures, some quite casual in passing, while others quite frequently come before us, as the lands of the Philistines, Assyrian and Babylonians. But for the moment I wish to look at Egypt. This country plays an important part in the Scriptures in various aspects. Firstly as a Saver of Life: Secondly as a Destroyer of Life: Thirdly as a Trading Nation.

Egypt of today, is still important for she controls the Suez Canal, but is much smaller than she was in Biblical times when she included modern Sudan, Chad, Libya and maybe parts of other North African Countries. In Genesis 1.9 we read "...let the waters under the heaven be gathered together..." one Biblical writer speaking of the land of Egypt says 'Egypt is the Nile' while another says 'the Nile was God's gift to Egypt.' We shall see later what a wonderful gift it was, to preserve life for individuals and nations. It is this aspect I wish to look at first. The first mention of Egypt in Scripture is seen in Genesis 12 after God tells Abram "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." "Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south." During this journey he came into the land of Canaan, a little later we are told, "And there was a famine in the land," so he made for Egypt - but why Egypt - due to the Nile Egypt had good harvests when most other countries crops had failed. Here we have an instance of Egypt being a saver of life, and the future nation of Israel through one of their ancestors was later saved. God at the creation having in His wisdom and foreknowledge brought the waters together among other works formed the Nile. In Biblical days it would be very rare for Egypt's crops to fail for lack of water and the attendant blessings. So vast are the number of tributaries which feed the Nile that its basin is approx. 1,100,00 sq. miles from over 10% of Africa. In the past the receding flooding of the Nile (I speak mainly of Biblical times) leaves an extremely rich deposit of alluvial soil from 5ft. to 60ft. in places covering an area of 100's square miles. The major result was that no artificial fertilizers were needed. It was not until recent years with the construction of the High Dam at Aswan has this changed. But today vast quantities of artificial fertilizers are needed to get a relatively fair return as compared with a few hundred years ago. No wonder the Romans looked on Egypt as their 'Bread Basket.'

Now we come forward some years to the next instance of Egypt being a life saver as seen in the time of Joseph. Starting with Joseph himself and concerning his dreams as we see in Genesis 37:19 and 20, "They said one to another, behold this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore and let us slay him." Reuben heard their plans and was no doubt disturbed, for they would at the least have left Joseph in the pit to die, but Reuben planned to return later and release him. But his plan was defeated, for while Reuben was away his brethren saw coming along some Ishmaelite traders on their way down to Egypt with their wares. The remaining brethren realized here was an opportunity to get rid of Joseph as they thought once and for all time. No need for any blood to be shed, the merchants would merely regard Joseph as another piece of merchandise which they duly sold to Potiphar as we see from Genesis ch. 37 v 36. Here we have a small instance of Egypt being used as a life saver, but the sequence was to be a far greater saving of life, even of Joseph's brethren who had wanted to get rid of him. To bring about the greater saving we see the hand of God at work. Remember that the ancient Egyptians placed much on dreams, many instances come to mind how God uses dreams to make known and foretell many unusual events which were to happen to bring about a part of His plan. As I mentioned earlier it was rare for

there to be a crop failure in the land of Egypt. In Genesis 41:50 we read "...and the famine shall consume the land."

So that Jacobs offspring should not be consumed. God made provision through a dream to Pharaoh which Joseph was able to interpret, the result being the whole region was saved from starvation and many other lands. It soon became known there was corn in Egypt. Genesis 57:1 we read "And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan." Later in Genesis we read, "now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons... I have heard there is corn in Egypt... buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die."

Having eaten that which his sons had obtained in Egypt later Jacob says to his sons "Go again buy us a little food." We are all familiar with the details of the various dreams, those of Pharaoh's butler and his baker and of his own, all of which were caused by God for a purpose; not as man's dreams in which the body may rest but the mind is still active. Here we see the full result of Egypt being a saver of life, for in Genesis 47 we read "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew and multiplied exceedingly," Multiplied exceedingly, so much so that when a new king arose over Egypt he was so concerned with their numbers it also seems he was not fully aware of the events of which had brought the Hebrew nation into Egypt, for he new not Joseph we are told. The new king said unto his people, "Behold the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we... let us deal wisely with them lest they join also unto our enemies and fight against us." The Egyptians made them to serve with rigour, but the more they afflicted them the more they grew and multiplied.

Next we see a long term strategy conceived to destroy the male children as soon as born among the Israelites, here we see Egypt as a destroyer of life, but as so often happens the plans of men back-fire, for under the hand of God the midwives the chief of whom were Shiph-rah and Pi-ah, but we are told the midwives feared God and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them.

When the Israelites finally left Egypt, God's destroying angel played his part upon the Egyptian firstborn, man and beast. The Nile was not a fast flowing river in all places, in fact from old records it seems there were nearby lakes fed by the river, at different times there were major cities in which Pharaoh would dwell, while we are told his daughter went at times to bathe, here again we see Egypt as a life saver. Moses was saved; we have the details in Exodus 2:2 and 5 "...she hid him three months... (his mother) took for him an ark of bulrushes and put the child therein... she laid it in the flags by the rivers brink." Pharaoh's daughter found it and said "This in one of the Hebrews' children." Having taken Moses as a child into her own household he would be brought up after the manner of Egyptian Royal Houses, being regarded as the child of Pharaoh's daughter and was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, both civilian and military, along with their superstitions etc., but in his very early life his mother who had acted as a nurse, no doubt carefully implanted in him the truth concerning God as the supreme creator - as contrasted with Egyptian myths - and the fact that his real mother was a Hebrew and not an Egyptian. Moses in fear left Egypt and fled to Midian in circumstances well known. The Pharaoh from whom Moses fled died and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage under which they were and their cry came up unto God. Later we are told (Exodus 2:25). "And God looked upon the children of Israel and God had respect unto them." In the next chapter is recorded Gods instructions to Moses in its early stage, "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people out of Egypt." Here we see the hand of God using a man for his purpose. As seen organization and control would be part of the training in military matters, while Moses' brethren the Israelites were labouring under hard bondage would need help so God brought back Moses from Midian that he could prepare them for the day when they were to flee from Egypt, not as a motley crowd but carefully organized. We are told in Scripture there were 600,000 men on foot so with the women, children and the mixed multitude who went up also they must have been well over 1 million persons. We see also that they did not leave empty handed. Exodus 5:21 and 22. "And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that when ye go, ye shall not go empty: but every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment... and ye shall spoil the Egyptians, "

We now look at Egypt as a trading nation. For in all ages basically wealth is obtained by trading. Today a very rare commodity is Egyptian cotton and linen. When we look in the Scriptures there are many examples of the various articles and animals for which Egypt was a market for “both “buyer and seller. The Ishmaelites were on their way down to Egypt with spices, balm and myrrh. Later Solomon traded in Egypt as a buyer of horses as seen in II Chronicles 1:15-17, and linen yarn, Proverbs 7:16 was obtained from Egypt. “I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.” Profane records also speak of the wealth gotten in trading by Egypt, to this day we have only to consider the wealth and value of trinkets and such like which have been found in the coffins of Egyptian’s of any standing in past ages, gold, silver, precious stones, many of which maybe came from the exploitation of slaves in the past ages among whom were the children of Israel. Isaiah speaks of those who trusted in Egypt in chapters 51 and 56.

Here we leave the Old Testament records. Moving forward to New Testament times our next instance of Egypt being a saver of life. The early verses of Matthew chapter 2 speak of when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men came reeking him, for we have seen his star in the east. “Out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.” As more details came to the ears of Herod, to him it meant trouble, another authority in the land. Jesus had to be destroyed. He instructed the wise men when they had found Jesus to come and let him know so he also could worship Him. But his deceit failed for it did not conform to Gods purpose. Again dreams were used by God to instruct them not to return to Herod. Because of their non-return the king was furious and ordered all male children up to the age of two to be slain. Matthew 2:18 “In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping and great mourning.” Joseph and Mary must have been very worried for their child was not just any child like others, their boy was the “Son of God,” what were they to do? Their fears were calmed. Matthew ch 2 “The angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt and be thou there until I bring thee word.” In due time that word came, “out of Egypt have I called my son,” verse 15. Dare we say this is the supreme case of Egypt being a life saver.

Today Egypt is the only Arab nation which has a peace treaty with Modern Israel, even though it be very shaky. Other Arab nations have only an armistice. We however look forward to the time spoken of by Zachariah when “Ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations... of the skirt of him that is a Jew... We will go with you for we have heard that God is with you.” What a reversal of the early days of Israel in Egypt.

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