

Ye Are My Witnesses

"Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee . . . He that scattered Israel shall gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock"—Jer. 30:11; 31:10

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

Who are these people scattered everywhere among the nations of the earth? Here we deal with a wonderful fact, before our very eyes. It is no matter of speculation or probability. It is a reality.

Here is a nation among all nations: a people dispersed in all countries, surviving in spite of opposition and persecution, clinging to their traditions of antiquity in spite of universal contempt.

What is the meaning of the strange spectacle? It was FORETOLD it would be so. In the ancient books they revere, which they have carried with them in their dispersion, and which have become the property of the world, it is written (and was written there 3,000 years ago by their first leader Moses) that because of their disobedience it would come to pass that,

"The Lord would scatter them from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth" (Deut. 28:64).

—but, that in the scattering, He would preserve them, *for the honor of His own Name* (Deut. 32:26-27)—that, though He would make a full end of all nations among whom He would scatter them, He would not make a full end of them, only correct them (Jer. 30).

How come such an extraordinary spectacle—a nation scattered for weary ages, with books in their hands, foretelling the event! Oh, we know the answer. *God spoke to this nation, and to none else.* Their history is the history of revelation. It is the proof of inspiration. They are God's monument among men. It is as God told them:

"Ye are my witnesses that I am God, and that there is none else."

It is not merely their *present* position that we look at. We look back upon the centuries, and we see *the Jews always there*. If we were to suppose the 18 centuries that have elapsed since Christ's appearance among men, to be represented by 18 pictures, *in each picture the Jew would be the steady object*, all other objects in the picture changing and waning.

The first picture would show us Caesar enthroned, with sceptre swaying all the earth—the Jew also enthroned, but subject to Caesar—Jerusalem still in her glory—Jacob having existence among the nations as a nation.

The second picture would show us Caesar in a halo of increased glory, and the Jew prostrate in the mire, receiving Gentile blows.

The third picture would be almost a repetition of the second. The fourth would show Roman glory beginning to pale before a new brightness—*of Jewish origin*—the brightness of Jesus' Name —paganism retiring before Constantine, who writes Christ's name with the point of the sword on the portals of the Roman system.

The fifth would show the Jew crouching in the corner before Catholic persecution. The sixth the same. The seventh, a new light on Rome's seven hills—a light of lurid evil omen—the furnace glare of Papal power, and the Jew wandering hither and thither uneasily in the fiery glow. The eighth and succeeding pictures would show us substantially the same figures with variations—the Jew always in all countries to the front.

In the eighteenth, the glory of Papalism would be seen on the wane, and just at its finish the Napoleonic meteor would strike and explode on the throne of "Saint" Peter, and involve its kingdom in darkness for a time.

The nineteenth would show us the Jew in a more erect posture and a more advanced figure in the foreground and with his eyes turned over his shoulder towards the desolate land of his fathers; around his head, a new and increasing light, and Gentile figures showing a confused grouping and a muddy radiance like the murky, misty yellow of the setting sun on a wintry day.

But in all the eighteen, *the Jew visible and prominent*—this is the point. Ah, and we may go back before the first century and say the same for an *equal score of ages preceding*.

Whatever we may read of Egypt, and Babylon, and Persia, and Greece, and Rome; the Jew is always side by side. At no point in the historic age is the Jew invisible. He is coeval with civilisation; he is concurrent with all human records of the past; and he is *with us today*—the only permanent figure in the changeful scene.

We look back upon the Egyptians, a powerful military nation at Israel's beginning; where are their power and glory now? Let the crumbling pyramids and rotting mummies, and chaotic ruins on the banks of the Nile, answer.

Where is Babylon, the destroyer of Jerusalem? Go to the banks of the Euphrates, and read, in the silent wastes and mounds, the fulfilment of the same Word which not only foretold Israel's dispersion *and preservation*, but Babylon's inhabitantless desolation from generation to generation (Isa. 13:20).

And Greece and Rome too, who fill so large a place in the literature of the polite, *where are they?* Their imperial power a history for the school, their nationality and language a study of bookworms, their race extinct, or represented only by the mongrel people of Italy and the Balkans.

But the Jew, here he is today, as *pronounced* a people, as *separate* a race, with as *fixed* a language, as in the palmiest days of Judah's power. The Jew is God's work, God's people, God's witness:

"This people have I formed for Myself, and THEY SHALL SHOW FORTH ALL MY PRAISE."

This is the meaning of their preservation, and the purpose of the preservation we shall yet see realised in the setting up of the Kingdom of God in all the earth, to the praise of Jehovah's Name in every land. But this is only half the subject. There is a *future*, as we know. Of this future, God spoke to a Jew in captivity at Babylon, "a man greatly beloved," to whom it was said,

"From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words."

The angel of Yahweh's presence thus addressed Daniel. To what purpose did Gabriel come to Daniel, greatly beloved in Babylon?

"To make thee understand what shall befall thy people IN THE LATTER DAYS."

And Daniel "understood the thing and had understanding of the vision" (10:1). And the vision is in our hands for us to understand also. What the vision reveals is this, that after a protracted period of down-treading and chaos, there would come a time "in the latter days," when Yahweh would deliver His people; when the land would be "cleansed;" and when the dispersed of Israel would be gathered again from the four winds of heaven, the glorious sequel of which would be the establishment of a Kingdom under the long-promised Anointed One, which should govern all mankind for the blessing of man and the glory of God.

A rough indication is given of the length of the time of down-treading—a length sufficiently great to justify Daniel's introductory statement (10:1) that "the time appointed was long." It is not necessary on this occasion to go into any technical demonstration on the subject of the times and

seasons. Suffice it to remember that *the "time appointed" expired in the age in which we live*, and that we have reached the time when the preliminary symptoms of emancipation ought to be visible, both as regards land and people.

If it be asked why we look for *preliminary* symptoms—why the thing may not come with the suddenness of a thunderclap—the answer is, it is revealed that the work will be gradual and at first natural. And the nature of the thing, considered in the light of God's dealings with Israel, requires gradual work in the first stage.

It is not in harmony with God's orderly and progressive ways in the past, that a scattered and despised nation and a desolate land should, in a single day, arise from the down-treading of centuries, though in its later stage (when the hour arrives for the manifestation of the Lord with his brethren), there will be quick and startling work. It is according to nature and analogy that the thing should begin slowly.

The question is, *Is the work begun?* Who can shut his eyes to the fact who takes a survey of the whole position for years past? We have first the emancipation of the Jew from civil disabilities.

The opposition to the Jew is now social. Men are his enemy privately, and they would like to alter the law, and are forming associations to try and bring about an alteration. But the law is in favor of the Jew as it has not been during the past centuries.

And this change is a latter-day change. It is about 30 years old or so. (Written in 1884). The Jew is today eligible to hold landed property, and to follow any profession, to vote in municipal and parliamentary elections, and to fill any office of authority, in many lands. This is a great change when looked at against the background of the dark centuries that are past.

Another fact to be noted is the wonderful wealth of the Jews. This has become quite proverbial. It is a comparatively modern development. However men may explain it; by whatever combination of circumstances it has come about, there is the fact patent to all the world that the strings of the money bags of the world are held by Jewish hands. Kings and governments have to use Rothschild when any great performance of finance has to be compassed. This is doubtless a preparation for events further on.

Then, we behold a work of organisation going on among the Jewish race which is quite a novel thing in their history. Until the present generation, since their dispersion, Israel has been a race of units, having no connection one part with another.

But now, they are becoming organised. The establishment of a universal Israelite alliance with headquarters at Paris has laid the foundation of a corporate existence unknown to Jewish life for ages. It has given the Jews a rudimentary nationality which cannot fail to be of the utmost importance in all future movements for their national resuscitation. It is "*bone coming to his bone*," the broken people coming together.

Under the auspices of the Alliance, there is an annual meeting of Jewish delegates from all parts of the world, at which matters affecting Jewish interests are debated, and from the officials of which, there is correspondence with Jews throughout the world.

So much for the *people*. Are there any symptoms of revived life for the *land*? People not interested or attentive to the matter would be astonished at all the facts that could be placed together in support of an affirmative answer to this question. Ever since the Crimean war when, by the treaty of Paris, Turkey was compelled to allow foreigners to hold land in any part of her empire, there has been a steady advance in the direction of new life in the land.

Jerusalem has become a changed city within the period that has elapsed since then. Building is going on in all directions outside the walls, and so it is also at several other centers. This revival of activity has also taken the form of agricultural settlements in various parts of the land; and the movement as a whole is *chiefly Jewish* (though Germans and others have taken part). The movement has received a great stimulus from various circumstances well within the memory of the brethren.

It is not only that colonies have been actually formed, but movements have been set on foot, and taken in hand by various classes of persons, which have for their object the Jewish settlement of the land on a large scale, and a situation has been created that only requires the ripening of imminent political changes in the East, to open the floodgates of Jewish immigration.

Egypt has been occupied by England. She is already in Cyprus, from which the mountains of the Holy Land are remotely visible.

All these things taken separately may each appear small, and without significance to the eye that only looks at them from the newspaper point of view, which is a very limited point of view. But, taken together, and looked at in the mass in connection with the long dark past of Israel's experience, and in the light of what has been revealed, *they have but one message to the ear of intelligence*. They tell us that we are in the era of the Lord's return. He comes, not only to raise and glorify his saints: He comes to deliver Israel from all distress.

Brethren, *the day is breaking*. If it takes a long time to break and is slow in coming, we must remember the day is long that is coming, and the night has been long from which it is emerging. "*Long hath the night of sorrow reigned; the dawn shall give us light.*"

The darkness is not so deep as it was fifty years ago. The pitchy blackness has given way to something like a twilight in which the forms of the mountains are dimly visible against the sky. The eastern horizon slowly lightens with the blush of coming dawn.

Soon the actual light will brighten all the air and gild the mountain tops. Soon a glorious shaft will strike athwart the somberness and tell the awaking world that the sun at last has risen and ascends the morning sky. Soon amid the turmoils and complications and gladsome tokens of this latter day, will Christ announce his presence.

What this will mean we know—at first, trouble, dire and prolonged, for the uncircumcised populations of the earth, but at last peace, and righteousness, and rest, and joy, and blessing. All mankind will share in the promised blessedness. Just as in the natural sunrise, all darkness flees before the glorious orb of day; just as all countries and all conditions receive the gladdening flood of light—the dens of barbarism alike with the homes of civilisation, so all nations, all ranks of men, all conditions of life, will be embraced in heavenly beams of the Sun of Righteousness.
