

Lots. On it the Biblical book, or rather scroll, of Esther is read. It is much favoured by children, and tends to be a joyous, even light-hearted, celebration.

#### Israel today

In Israel today three calendars are recognised for everyday use: the Gregorian, which is now accepted almost worldwide, the Hebrew calendar, and the Islamic, those last two marking the religious festivals. There are other calendars in use by minor religious sects.

The Hebrew calendar starts from the presumed or traditional date of Creation. Thus the year beginning 16 September 2004 by the Gregorian calendar is the year 5765 in the Hebrew calendar. The only newspaper published in English in Israel, the *Jerusalem Post*, referred to that fact, having a quiet joke at the expense of our calendar, when it ran an advertising slogan: "Step into the 58th century—visit Israel!".

#### Sources consulted

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## From the Editor's postbag

### Comments on items received from readers

#### Victory at Trafalgar

Elsewhere in this magazine I draw attention to the importance of Admiral Nelson in ensuring that Britain retained control of the seas during the Napoleonic Wars ("[Norwich scenes](#)", p. [XXII](#)). The greatest of his victories was the one in which he lost his life, Trafalgar, on 21 October 1805.

By coincidence, a reader has sent me a photocopy of a facsimile of part of *The Times* newspaper for 7 November of that year containing a report by Rear-Admiral Collingwood (Nelson's deputy and successor) on the battle.

He draws attention to the General Order made by Collingwood the day after the battle, as follows:

"The Almighty God, Whose arm is strength, having of His

great mercy been pleased to crown the exertion of his Majesty's fleet with success, in giving them a complete victory over their enemies, on 21st of this month: and that all praise and thanksgiving may be offered up to the Throne of Grace for the great benefits to our country and to mankind:

"I have thought proper that a day should be appointed of general humiliation before God, and thanksgiving for this His merciful goodness, imploring forgiveness of sins, a continuation of His divine mercy, and His constant aid to us in the defence of our country's liberties and laws, without which the utmost efforts of man are nought; and direct, therefore, that [a day] be

appointed for this holy purpose".

Collingwood's report also witnesses to a belief in God's hand at work both in giving victory to the British fleet and in preserving it afterwards:

"it pleased the Almighty Disposer of all events to grant his Majesty's arms a complete and glorious victory"; "the same good Providence which aided us through such a day preserved us in the night, by the wind shifting a few points, and drifting the ships off the land".

The second quotation refers to the fact that many of the British ships were damaged in the battle and could easily have been driven onshore by the wind had it not changed direction.

Looking back, it is possible to see how a British victory in the

Napoleonic Wars, in particular mastery of the seas, was a necessary part of God's advancing purpose in the latter days. From another angle, Collingwood's words depict a rather different attitude from that which exists today, when many, if not most, British leaders are atheists or agnostics, and those with religious beliefs keep them hidden.

Regarding Nelson and Trafalgar, we shall be hearing a lot more about them during the course of the next year, because 2005 is the two hundredth anniversary of the battle.

#### **Fundamentalist Christians and American foreign policy**

Regarding the previous item, it is doubtful whether Admiral Collingwood thought of the British victory at Trafalgar as playing a part in fulfilling Bible prophecy. Unlike British leaders today, many American politicians count themselves as fundamentalist Christians, and there are concerns that they actually see themselves as contributing towards the fulfilment of Bible prophecy according to how fundamentalists see it. Such concerns are expressed in an article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 16 October last, passed to me by a reader. The article is entitled, "Blood-drenched visions of the end of time fire Christian and Islamic fundamentalists alike", and the author is Adam Nicholson.

Nicholson begins by getting himself into a muddle over Bible quotations. He says that when George Bush announced last year that victory over Iraq had been achieved he said: "Wherever you go, you carry a message of hope—a message that is ancient and ever new. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'To the captives, come out, and to

those in darkness, be free'". Presumably Mr. Bush was applying those words from Isaiah to the Iraqi people, set free from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein's rule. The quotation, says Adam Nicholson, comes from Isaiah 49:9, and Nicholson then goes on to give what he considers to be the whole passage from which the quotation comes, except that the passage he quotes is actually Isaiah 61.

Mr. Bush is, of course misapplying Isaiah anyway; it is not about freeing nations from tyrannies, but about freeing people from the bondage of sin and death, and the freeing is done by Christ, as God's servant. However, it is the fact that passages such as Isaiah 49 and 61 are about God's servant that causes Adam Nicholson to raise the question as to whether George Bush saw himself as the servant of God in dealing with Iraq. He refers to what Bush allegedly said to the Palestinian prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas: "God told me to strike at al-Qa'eda and I struck them, and he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did"; and concludes:

"Bush was laying claim [in quoting Isaiah 49 about the victory over Iraq], before his core audience in fundamentalist America, to the robe of righteousness [Isaiah 61:10], the duty of the watchman, and the crusade to make Jerusalem a praise in the Earth [Isaiah 62:6,7]. The statement is not about oil, regime change or WMD [weapons of mass destruction]. It is a vision of establishing the Christian God's dominion on earth".

Nicholson then goes on to link these views about the establishment of God's dominion on the

earth with what he calls "the blood-drenched visions of the end of time in Revelation", which are based on passages of a similar character in the Old Testament. He links Christian fundamentalists' use of such parts of the Bible with Muslim and Jewish fundamentalism, claiming that Muslims also revere the book of Revelation (a point new to me), and referring to the use by Jews of Daniel in a similar way. Then, after referring in particular to the growing disaster which is Iraq, he says:

"for any Christian who is driven by an apocalyptic and millennial vision, these events are exactly what should be happening. Terrible and desperate violence, blood and grief are all, for them, mileposts on the road to God's dominion. The more of them there are, the better it is".

Nicholson's conclusion is that the fundamentalists "are wrong, and the vision is wicked". He has a point, but the matter is more complicated than that, and I would make the following points:

- As we well know, Bible prophecy undoubtedly speaks of a terrible time of trouble coming upon the earth before Jesus Christ establishes God's Kingdom
- True Biblical Christians keep themselves from all involvement in politics and the military. This is very far from the idea of 'Christian' politicians either making the world a better place by warring against dictators or taking action which will trigger off the terrible events of the time of the end.
- Fundamentalist Christians apply the visions of the Apocalypse to the future, and

in a very literal way, whereas the traditional Christadelphian approach is that most of the visions are highly symbolic in character and have already been fulfilled. This leads to very different ideas as to what will happen in the last days.

- God ensures that it is those who will fulfil His purpose who exercise leadership in the kingdoms of men, and He channels their desires and plans to that end. If Nicholson is right about President Bush, and others not named, we may be sure that God's hand is behind it to fulfil His purpose.

### The Huguenots and Brother Thomas

In the previous "Editor's Postbag" (Sept. p. 346) I referred to the evidence in Brother Charles Blore's booklet, *Dr Thomas: His family and Background*, that Brother Thomas was of Huguenot descent. Further correspondence has led me to look into this more closely from the booklet.

One feature of Brother Thomas's genealogy is the frequent occurrence of 'Moy' as a Christian name, usually a second Christian name, a feature which continued after Brother Thomas's time in other branches of the family. Moy is a surname of Dutch origin, and in a recent visit to a local museum I was interested to find in an exhibit about the influx of Protestants from the Netherlands a list of locally common surnames of Dutch origin, which included Moyes, a variation of Moy. Attention was drawn to this influx of Dutch Protestants in an earlier "Norwich Scenes" (Apr. 2004, p. VIII). It would appear, therefore, that Brother Thomas's ancestry in-

cluded Protestants from the Netherlands of the name Moy, the surname eventually being preserved as an unusual Christian name. There are a number of variations on the name; our local telephone book has Moy, Moye, Moyes, Moys and Moyse, though Moy is the most common.

My correspondent informs me that the name Moys, and variations of it, are common in Devon and Cornwall, and that some of that name claim to have Jewish ancestry. Holland was one of the earliest countries to tolerate Jews, and in the seventeenth century they flourished there.

We can, however, according to this correspondence, take this further. During the Middle Ages many Jews lived in Spain, but in 1492 they were compelled either to convert to Roman Catholicism or to leave the country. Most went into various parts of the Ottoman Empire. Others became publicly Catholics but secretly Jews, being known as marranos. Such remained in fear of their secret Judaism being discovered in the fanatically Catholic Spain, and many emigrated to France or the Netherlands, which were not so fanatically Catholic. Some who were openly Jews also managed to be accepted in more tolerant parts of France.

In the next century the Reformation broke out in Europe, and many in France and the Netherlands became Protestants, those in France being the Huguenots. I have been sent a copy of a paper entitled, "Searching for crypto-Jews in France: from Spanish Jews to French Huguenots".<sup>1</sup> The paper refers to the fact that the Jews who settled in France later disappeared off the scene, this being apparent from the disappear-

ance of their families from local records. Some are known to have moved to Holland, and the suggestion is made that many of those remaining in France became Huguenots. Points made in support of this are:

- 1 The Huguenot movement in France was strongest in the southwest, which is the nearest part of France to Spain and the area where Jews are known to have settled.
- 2 Families of known Huguenot descent in the USA have names typical of Sephardic Jews (who mainly originated from Spain). Some of these families have traditions that they are of Jewish descent.
- 3 The Huguenots had a much greater affinity with the Jews than did most Protestants; Martin Luther, for example, was fanatically anti-Jewish. The Huguenot shield had a burning bush in the middle with God's Name written in Hebrew, and they referred to this life as a desert, linking themselves with the children of Israel in the wilderness.

This opens up the intriguing possibility that Brother Thomas's ancestry runs back through the Huguenots to Spanish Jews. It is well known that under Divine providence the circumstances of his life pushed him towards the rediscovery of Bible truth. Is it also the case that the Divine hand was at work in his ancestry, preparing him as a suitable vessel for the proclamation of the hope of Israel to far-off Gentiles?

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1. Author Abraham D. Lavender, Department of Sociology, Florida State University, Miami. Available at <http://www.cryptojews.com/HUGANOTS.html>, and that is the way the website address spells Huguenot. Lavender himself is of Huguenot descent.