BIBLE TRUTH
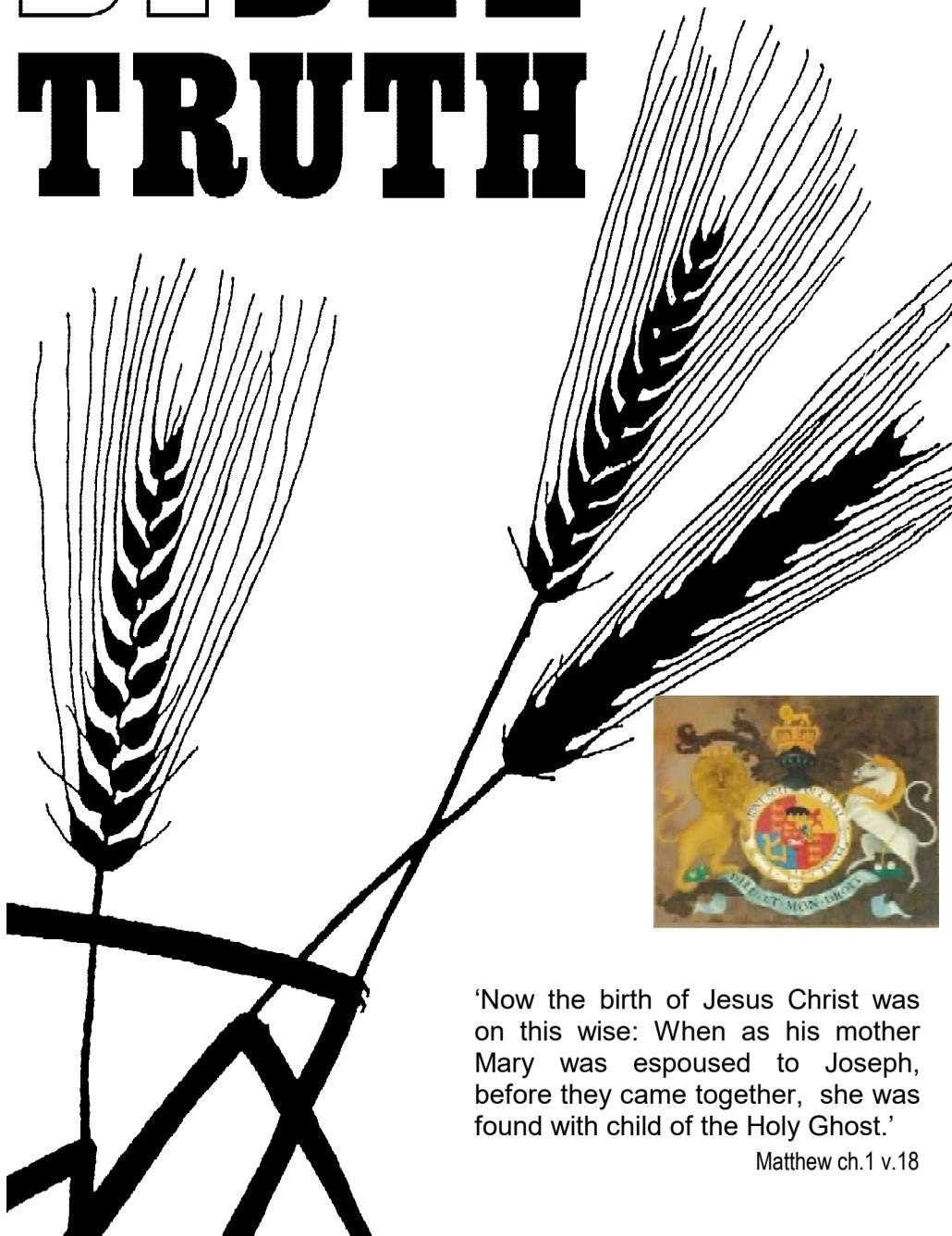
'Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.'

Matthew ch.1 v.18

THE HEBREW-ENGLISH CONNECTION CONFIRMED

by Pastor Jory Steven Brooks,
Canadian British-Israel Association

For many years, adherents of the British-Israel, two-houses of Israel teaching have endured the contention of religious critics that there is absolutely no connection between the Hebrew and English languages. Many years ago, one such detractor, a Jewish bookseller at a Midwest book fair exclaimed to me that, 'I will eat my hat if you can show me a single English word derived from Hebrew!'

Yet scholars for years have asserted that there is indeed such a connection. Going back to 1869, language researcher Robert Govett presented his findings in a 135-page book filled with evidence entitled, *English Derived From Hebrew*. In his introduction, Govett stated,

> 'As the result of my inquiry, I should be inclined to say that there are not five percent of Saxon words which cannot be traced to Hebrew'.

There have been a number of concurring studies since that time in scholarly books and journals. In *A Study Of Races In The Ancient Near East* (p.50), University of Michigan professor William H. Worrell states, 'But the Insular Celtic languages …remind one strongly of Hamitic and Semitic'.

Yet etymological dictionaries obscure this by deriving most of our English words from Greek and Latin, including words with an obvious Hebrew origin, such as jubilee and jubilate, two words derived from the Hebrew, yobel, meaning to blow a trumpet, the signal announcing the Biblical Year of Jubilee.

In spite of past ignorance on this subject, significant current research by language scholars has now established a firm connection between Hebrew and English, which one expert has declared 'extremely exciting and promising'. Professor Allan R. Bomhard, in a research article published in the *Journal of Indo-European Studies* (vol.5 pp 55-99) has confirmed that there is 'a genetic relationship

between the Indo-European languages and the Semitic languages'. In the past, many scholars erred in doubting such a relationship, in part because 'many lexical look-a-likes have been taken to be cognates when they are not, while true cognates have gone undetected' (ibid).

Dr. Bomhard gives many pages of examples of European words derived from Hebrew. A few representative examples include these.

Hebrew	Source of
dalal - to hang,dangle	Swedish - *dilla* Low German - *dallen* with same meaning
deror - freedom	Old Saxon - *derbi* - strong, powerful
bar - grain	Old English - *bere* - barley
bare - to cut down, cut out	Old English - *borian* - to bore
bo - to come in, go,enter	Gothic - *bauan* - to dwell, inhabit
balah - to become old & worn out	Old English - *bealo* -calamity,injury Old Icelandic - *blaubr* - soft, weak Old Saxon - *boleti* - to be sick
pelah - mill-stone	Greek - *pella* - stone
par - young bull, steer	Old English - *fearr* - bull
beros - cypress, pine	compare Old English - *byrst* - bristle Old Irish - *bairgen* - bread Old Saxon - *boro* -spruce, fir

The connection between the Hebrew and Old Irish alphabets has been commented on through the years by various writers. An interesting chart appears in Theosophie Semitique, p.59 published in Paris in 1888. In two columns, the Hebrew alphabet letters are set next to the corresponding letters in the Old Irish-Celtic alphabet.

This is verified more recently in *The Celtic Druids*, by Godfrey Higgins, 2007, pp. 23-26.

Hebrew	Old Irish-Celtic
aleph	ailm
beth	beith
daleth	duir,
jod	jodha
mem	muin
nun	nuin,
oin=	oir
resh	ruis
pe	peith
tan	teine

It must be kept in mind that living languages are constantly changing and adding new words as conditions require, or altering their meaning, while other words may pass completely out of usage. Over time, the original form of a language may seem strange and alien to our ears, as, for example, reading a work today by Shakespeare written four centuries ago. It is not surprising that over a period of two, three, or even four thousand years, the divergence between Hebrew and European languages have become quite substantial. This certainly obscures their original unity, which has now been traced out by respected language scholars.

One of the usual arguments given as a reason for the assumed incongruity of Hebrew and English is that in Semitic, the 'vast majority of roots … are composed of three consonants', in contrast to European languages which are 'biconsonantal', using two consonants. However, scholars point out that other Semitic languages are not limited to three consonants per root, nor was this originally the case in early Hebrew. Instead, it was 'an innovation' during Biblical times and after (*Bomhard*, p.97).

Another reason that non-scholars doubt a connection between the Hebrew and European languages is due to the totally different alphabet used in modern Hebrew. The common Hebrew characters today are of a square design, but few are aware that this was also a late innovation. In the third century BC, a dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans resulted in the rabbis discarding the Pre-Exilic alphabet, and adopting the completely new square letter format in order to distinguish themselves and their writing from their hated

neighbours (*A Social History Of Hebrew*, by William H.Schniedewind, 2013, p.172). The old alphabetic letters, now commonly known as Paleo-Hebrew, lived on, having been adopted in a revised form by the Greeks and Romans, and ultimately developing into the European alphabet of today.

The third main argument against a Hebrew-European language connection is that Hebrew reads from right to left, while modern European languages read left to right. Yet early Semitic languages sometimes read in either direction, just as some of the early European languages did as well, before the European dialects settled on an opposite format from Modern Hebrew. For a time, European languages were boustrophedon, sometimes switching direction from left or right. There is an interesting discussion on this subject by Dr Peter C. Craigie in the *Tyndale Bulletin* vol. 34 pp. 155-156 (1983).

Another modern language scholar who verifies the Hebrew-European connection is Dr Paul J. Hopper, writing in the *Journal of Indo-European Studies* (vol. 5:41-51), who states that Indo-European 'bears close resemblance also to the consonant systems of Semitic and possibly also other ancient Mediterranean languages. These linguistic resemblances cannot be ignored in view of the aggregate of evidence…'. Yet the connection between Hebrew and European languages has long been ignored as well as its implications for the study of the migration of Israel's lost tribes in ancient times after the Assyrian captivity.

Dr Bomhard says in conclusion, '… the consonant systems of Proto-Semitic and Proto-Indo-European were compared and were found to be typologically similar … and it was clearly established that both Semitic and Indo-European share many common nominal and verbal stems. Even though there are many differences between Semitic and Indo-European, I think that the similarities are far too numerous to be ignored. A new start has been made in joining together these two language families. The future of the "Indo-European-Semitic" hypothesis looks extremely exciting and promising' (*Bomhard*, p.99). Yes, it is indeed exciting to understand the Biblical and prophetic implications of this new information that joins the Hebrew and European families!

<div align="center">*******</div>