

The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness, and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed.
Upholding the Truth as Bereans since 1923.

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God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

HENGOED, Wales, UK – Breaking of Bread, 10:45 A.M.; Sunday School, 12:45 P.M.; Lecture, 2:30 P.M.; Bible Class and Elpis Israel Class - held in the homes of the brethren and sisters; Youth Evening – held every 2 weeks on Friday at the Country Park at 6.30pm – Bro. Phillip Hughes, 25 Hoel Y Gelli, FForchneol Parc, Godreaman, Aberdare, Mid Glam., UK CF44 6LN; phone (011) 441-685-870254
Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant,

On Sunday 25th January, the Hengoes ecclesia had the pleasure of welcoming into fellowship Bro. Alexey Matveev and his mother Sis Natalia Matvejev, after having agreed unreservedly with the Berean Basis of Fellowship. The undersigned and brethren Stephen Male, David Hughes and Matthew Hughes flew to Estonia for the interview on Saturday 24th January in the capital city Tallinn. Bro. Alexey and Sis. Natalia had also made a four-hour journey to meet with us. They had withdrawn from a different Christadelphian group and had carefully studied the Berean Basis of Fellowship. The comprehensive interview indicated the thorough grasp they had of our position as Bro. Aleksei turned up the Scriptures to support their beliefs. Bro. Stephen provided a sound word of exhortation on the Sunday morning, making reference to the necessity of having sound principles of fellowship, and also drawing attention to the example of Joseph as an encouragement in our walk towards Zion. Bro. Phillip then extended the right hand of fellowship on behalf of the brotherhood.

The daily readings were also engaged in during the weekend and discussed with much profit, and as Sis Natalia only speaks Russian, Bro. Alexey acted as an interpreter, (as he did during the whole weekend). Bro. Alexey also guided us around parts of the city and it was a strange feeling being in the country that once was under the control (and will again be under the control) of the nation that is destined to fulfill the prophetic role of the King of the North. The brethren from the Hengoes ecclesia enjoyed the weekend immensely, and were delighted to share in the company of our new Brother and Sister. Their private address is “Kreenholmi 31-1, Narva, Estonia, 20203” and their e-mail address is Alexeymatveev78@hotmail.com They would appreciate any letters in their isolated position.

With love in Elpis Israel and on behalf of the brethren and sisters of the Hengoes Ecclesia, Bro Phillip Hughes

NARVA, Estonia, Europe - Memorial 11:30 am (Sunday); Mid-week Study class(Weds.) Bro. Alexey Matveev; 6:30 pm. Meetings held Kreenholmi 31-1, Narva, 20203, Estonia, Europe Phone number + 372 35 61650

Our dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus

We were glad to be accepted into the Berean fellowship after the discussions that we have had with UK brethren (members of Hengoes Welsh ecclesia).

With much love in the One hope we share,
Bro. Alexey Matveev and Sis. Natalia Matveev (my mother)

CHESAPEAKE, Virginia - S.S. 10:00 AM; Memorial 11:00 AM; Eureka class alternating Sunday evenings. Meetings held at 321 Woodbridge Dr., Chesapeake, VA 23322. Dale Lee, 757-547-5816.

Dear brethren and sisters,
Loving greetings in the Hope of Israel,

We are pleased to report the formation of a Berean ecclesia in Chesapeake, Virginia. As most of you already know, Bro. Dale Lee, Sis. Kathy Lee, and Bro. Bryan Lee were accepted into the Berean fellowship after being interviewed by the examining brethren of the Boston ecclesia on December 27th, 2003. Our application for membership was the consequence of our examination of the issues that previously separated us as members of the unamended community.

Our examination, motivated by events in Virginia, commenced in 1999 and continued until 2002, when we concluded that certain beliefs we formerly held were not scriptural nor in agreement with our pioneer brethren. Unfortunately, we knew very little about the Bereans and had not considered the fellowship until Bro. Bob Widding, also formerly unamended, exchanged correspondence with us in the summer of 2003. At his suggestion, we inquired as to whether we could attend the Detroit gathering to learn, see and hear Bereans in worship and fellowship. Favorably impressed, we deliberated our course of action relative to surrendering our responsibilities in the unamended community and subsequently resigned from that community the 2nd of November, 2003. As many of you also know, we were stopped by a blizzard on our first attempt to reach Boston for an interview. Notwithstanding, we tried again and the trip was successfully completed.

At this time we wish to thank all who have assisted or encouraged us in our transfer to a fellowship that is compatible with our beliefs. Brethren in Little Rock, Detroit and Boston have been particularly helpful in making the transition. But we especially want to acknowledge the many brothers and sisters who made us feel welcome as guests at the Detroit gathering, the many who corresponded with us afterward, and even those whom we have not met, but whose work, either on the internet or in articles, greatly influenced us. And we also want to thank all the members of the Boston ecclesia, who truly made us feel welcome and loved. All that have welcomed us have caused us to see that we have joined a family as well as a fellowship.

We also would like to commend our new brethren and sisters for their faithfulness to the scriptures and to our pioneer brethren's' expositions. As we researched, observed and inquired concerning the Bereans we did not find any traces of clean flesh or partial atonement; preterism, or futurism regarding the Apocalypse; no pseudo-scientific theories on creation; no claims of present day possession of Holy Spirit gifts; nor any of the many other heresies that have been allowed to survive in other fellowships. May this ever be the case until our Lord returns.

We welcome any brothers and sisters to visit us here in Virginia where a lot of the early history of the Truth occurred through the labors of Bro. John Thomas. Occasionally, we will meet in North Carolina, so we would advise you to give us a call if you know you will be in the area.

In addition, effective February 12th, Bryan Lee's new address will be 4712 Hudson Rd., Wilson, NC 27896.

With love on behalf of the Chesapeake ecclesia,
Bro. Dale Lee

NEWTON, North Carolina - Sunday School and Study Class 10:AM Sunday Morning. Memorial Meeting 10:30 AM. Bible Class and Daily Readings every evening around 8:00 PM. Bro. Mike Murphy, 347 South College Ave, Newton NC 28658, 828-465-6779 and work 828-465-3656. Skydvrrmm@twave.net.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Loving Greetings in our Master's name,

Sister Joyce and I have had the pleasure of having different brethren attend our memorial meetings in the last year. Bro. Michael and Sis. Leslie, Bro. Len and Sis. Pam Naglieri and family. Bro. David and Sis. Kelly Sommerville visited us on their way back from the Hye meeting with Bro. Josh Garvey. Bro. Jim Rankin has made several visits driving through the area. It's always a great pleasure having Brethren visit. We have had numerous other people attend our Memorial meetings and hopefully one day they will make a decision to accept the "Truth."

Our student work consists of Joe Barker, my daughter-in-law Cathy, her daughter Nikki, age 10, my middle son Jeremy Murphy, Dianne McMellion in Forest City, and 3 inmates in prison in Rutherfordton, NC. Dianne originally contacted me via email. She got my email address from the Berean Web Site. She wanted to know if I would send some information to her brother Michael. Michael is one of the inmates I'm working with. Dianne and Michael are both on Key Lesson 6 and are doing very well with the lessons. Michael and I correspond via regular mail and when he writes, I can really get a sense of his loneliness and frustration from being in jail. I can only imagine what loneliness Jesus Christ would have felt prior to his crucifixion.

Also in the past year we have had a Study Weekend in March and Sis. Joyce was baptized on May 3, 2003; we had quite a few brethren attend both events. Sis. Joyce and I attended the Ohio Picnic and the Detroit gathering, both of which were real blessings for both of us.

Bro. Dale Lee and I are talking about having a study weekend, Memorial Weekend, God willing. The details are not available at this time but we will let you know.

Love in the Truth we share,
Bro. Mike and Sis. Joyce Murphy

LAS CRUCES, New Mexico, Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia,
Memorial 10am; Key Lesson Bible Seminar 1pm; Tuesday 7pm Mid-Week
Bible Class; Tuesday and Thursday 7:30pm Walk and Conduct Class & Social
Time Meeting Hall address: 800A Spruce Street, Las Cruces, NM 88011;
Bro. Michael Morrell, 301 North Roadrunner Parkway #309, Las Cruces, NM
88011; morrell@morrellcom.com Web Page <http://lascruces.bereans.org/main>

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Las Cruces Berean Christadelphia Ecclesia is pleased to welcome into fellowship Lupe Ogaz. Lupe was baptized years ago by the El Paso Central Ecclesia and has lived in complete isolation for many years after that ecclesia disbanded. She tells us she was completely without contact from brothers and sisters and prayed earnestly for relief from her isolation. Sister Lupe is a cancer survivor, and has recently had to undergo surgery to remove a benign tumor in her hand.

Her son, Anthony, saw our advertisement in a local paper and contacted us on his mother's behalf. Brother Michael and Sister Leslie held classes with her for several weeks in November. During December and January Brother Michael spent several evenings going over our statement of faith and beliefs and after a successful interview Sister Lupe was welcomed into fellowship. Anthony Torres, Sister Lupe's son, is interested in instruction for baptism and will be joining us for classes towards that goal.

Sister Lupe can be reached at:
Lupe Ogaz
2200 Holiday Ave #112
Las Cruces, NM 88005

We are also very pleased to welcome home Sister Leslie Morrell after a long two month visit to New England where she had to care for their son, Justin Metsch. Justin is doing much better and seems to be on the road to complete recovery. Sister Leslie extends her thanks to her dear brothers and sisters throughout the fellowship who provided so much support to her during her stay in New England. In spite of the difficult circumstances, the Lord provided her with the opportunity to visit with the brothers and sisters of the Boston Ecclesia and to be with our children who remain in the Boston area. God is gracious and kind and provides us with the strength and comfort we need during hard times.

Love in Christ,
Bro. Michael Morrell

Books For Kenya

If you have books and material that you can send and would like to help in this effort, please contact Sis. Kaye Yuen at Syuen33550@aol.com or fax (604) 925-0649.

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

HENGOED FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Mar 19 - 22, 2004

It will be held at Buckland Hall - (See web site www.bucklandhall.co.uk)
Bro. Phillip Hughes 25 Hoel-Y-Gelli Fforchneol Parc, Godreaman, Aberdare, Mid-Glamorgan, South Wales, U.K., CF44 6LN, phone 011-441-685-870254

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING..... June 10 - 13, 2004

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 19 - 25, 2004

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868

Study Class Topics: Galatians – Daily Bible Readings - Discussion

CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Oct 9 - 10, 2004

Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 330-494-7717

Every Man Purifieth Himself

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves"—John 1:8.

No one, it would seem, would make that bare statement. We all are only too fully aware that we are far from sinless. But there is a kindred frame of mind that is perhaps more common and more deceptive. It is a form of self-satisfaction. It says, "We are doing as well as can be expected of us." In Bible words—

"We are rich, increased in goods, and have need of nothing."

This attitude can too easily indicate a total lack of comprehension of the whole purpose of life and condition of natural man. It isn't a case of just getting through life, like a routine to be done. Life must be regarded rather as an opportunity—not merely a duty. The span of our life is the period given us to accomplish certain definite results. These things, if our life is to be regarded as a success, must be done, and this is the only time in which they can be done.

We are born in a certain condition—with certain propensities, certain characteristics. In the aggregate these are known as the "flesh." There is nothing good or wholesome about them. They are unpleasing, unholy and unlovely—crude, selfish, earthy. That is our nature. It can be pleasant, but its pleasantness is of the thin and self-centered kind that vanishes when it is annoyed. It can love, but its love is rooted in self-gratification. Broadly speaking, where its own interests and pleasures and emotions are not concerned, it is thoughtless and heartless.

The world in general would not concur in this analysis. We ourselves would hesitate to express it if solely based upon our own observation. If we permit ourselves to be influenced by common opinion of the world's general self-approbation, we shall regard this view as hard and extreme, but if we fully accept the authority of God's Word, we must accept His appraisal of human nature.

This then is the foundation with which we start. This is the rough material with which we must work. But we are called from it to holiness, perfection and purity. A complete transformation from the ugly, repulsive, selfish thing we first discover ourselves to be, to a lovely, glorious likeness to the character of God. Not as a present achievement, but as the unceasing incentive of an ultimate goal.

And it is the apostle John whose name is most closely linked with the powerful agent that is to accomplish this transformation. That agent, of which John speaks so fully, is love. The greatest danger, it would seem, in regard to this subject, is misunderstanding, or not fully comprehending, what is scripturally meant by love.

It is not an emotion. It is a far bigger, better thing than that. It is a principle of life. It is the adoption, as the determining influence of every action, of the revealed divine viewpoint. God is love. Love is God. No definition of love is true which limits this conception. Love is godliness of character and action. Love is the enlightened expression of the mind of God. It is divinity. It is the antithesis of everything human, carnal and earthy.

Love is an expanding, uplifting influence, wholly pleasing and wholly satisfying, based on broad and eternal principles, with all the smallness and pettiness of human nature put away.

How does love transform us? We know that every thought leaves within us a permanent effect for good or evil. As individuals, we are merely the sum totals of all our thoughts. We cannot separate ourselves from them, because we are them—

"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Proverbs 23: 7).

Every thought leaves its actual, physical effect upon our constitution. Thoughts are the small units of construction of which our characters consists. Every good thought is beneficial and works toward the final desired result; every distracting thought is a useless impediment; every evil thought is a ruthless breaking down of what faith is laboring to build. Therefore we are told—

"Bring into captivity every thought" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Our thoughts, and consequently our speech and actions, are influenced by many things—our nature, people, and circumstances, among others. Slowly we are molded by these influences, and upon them our character depends. Of all the influences which bear upon us and form our character, there is only one which can benefit and improve us to any extent and that is the influence of God.

We cannot create goodness or holiness within ourselves. We become what we are made. But we can, to a determining extent, choose the influences which are to make us. That is our responsibility. We cannot be free. In the nature of things, we must serve some master. If we choose sin or the world, we become its servants, its slaves, and it gradually shapes us to its hideous pattern of death.

But this is where love can play its saving part, and if submitted to, can mold us to the beauty of everlasting life. Love cannot be separated from God. Love is divinity and godliness—wisdom, holiness, purity, kindness and patience combined.

Above all, patience. Paul begins his analysis of love by saying, "Love suffereth long and is kind." Patience holds the keys. As long as patience holds open the door, all other virtues may and will develop. As soon as impatience closes it, all hope of peace or advancement is destroyed. John says—

"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3).

And he continues:

"Little children, let no man deceive you—he that doeth righteousness is righteous."

What is John driving at? Is he not trying to impress us with the fact that our effort must show some tangible results?—that good intentions are not enough. There must be visible improvement—a steady growth of godly attributes and weakening of earthly ones.

"Unto him that overcometh" are promised many things but nothing for him that meant to overcome. We must overcome—we must advance. What was acceptable yesterday is not good enough today. Yesterday's goal must be today's starting point. "Therefore," says Paul (Hebrews 6:1)—

"Leaving the first principles . . . let us GO ON to perfection."

It is a long way to perfection for the natural man. We have far to go and much to do. We must increase the talents entrusted to us. There was nothing but bitter condemnation for the servant who buried his lord's money in the earth. True, he kept it safely—but that is NOT ENOUGH. He didn't increase it. The warning is clear. There must be tangible RESULTS.

There is no excuse. We know the formula. We have only to make the effort to apply it. It is inevitable that we shall be molded and shaped by the influences with which we come in contact. It is a universal law. It is up to us to choose the influences wisely. WE CANNOT REMAIN UNCHANGED. Every experience and action has its effect, whether of death unto death or life unto life.

If we subject ourselves to the influence and thinking of the world, we shall bring forth fruit unto the world. It is a natural law of our constitution. If we subject ourselves to the influence of the Word of God with a consistency and intimacy that permits it to have its perfect work, we shall gradually acquire a godlike character. It cannot fail. AND IT MUST BE DONE.

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Pretty words indeed—BUT—do they really mean anything specific to us?—can we give any EVIDENCE of their operation IN OURSELVES? Can we point to spiritual fruit?—gentleness, patience, purity and truth? This is the most important question that can ever be asked us. It will be asked us soon.

The world is rapidly approaching chaos. What have we to show at the final reckoning?

Talk is cheap—very, very cheap. Fine phrases are sweet, and profession is easy in these tolerant, friendly days. But the real battle is just as hard, and just as important as ever.

"If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

AND NOT OTHERWISE. Do we even know what it means? We shall find out some day if we don't. Some day it will be burned into our minds to the exclusion of every thought. Thousands are already standing silently at the Bar, waiting for the number to be made complete. Many of them we have known intimately. Soon we shall join them. Let us ponder it well.

Having a smattering of the "First Principles" and being, as the phrase is, "in the Truth," is no stopping point or guarantee. Can any be so self-deceived? Do any feel that in doing this we have done all that is necessary and can wait in assurance for the final divine approval, in the meantime busying ourselves with such transient things as attract our attention? Is it that easy?

We have set our hand to a lifelong work, and have promised to put it foremost. The baptismal examination is just to see if we understand the promise we are making and the responsibility that we are solemnly taking upon ourselves.

The transformation from the course of death to the course of life is a long and painful process, requiring constant fortification. We promise, at baptism, to adopt an entirely new course of life, based on revolutionary principles. We promise to put away forever the motive of pleasing ourselves and adopt the motive of pleasing God alone. We promise to apply this to every action, knowing that the only way to become godlike, and finally immortal, is to minutely and consistently follow a God-directed course of action which gradually puts the flesh to death.

This applies to every action and decision, particularly the everyday ones, for it is the small, hard-to-control reactions and emotions that hold the balance of power, for good or ill. The smaller an action is, the more fundamental it is and the more it reveals character. It is much easier to key ourselves up for the big things than to be consistently true in the little ones.

This requires a continuous absorption of incentive and direction and power from the Spirit of God, through His recorded Word. This is the whole secret. Success or failure depends directly upon it. If we put ourselves, by constant study and reflection, in permanent contact with godliness, we shall be gradually transformed by it. If we don't, then it won't happen. Everything is the result of cause and effect—

"As a man soweth, so shall he reap."

"Think on these things," says Paul, "Meditate on them—give thyself wholly to them." GIVE THYSELF WHOLLY TO THEM. That leaves room for nothing else. Such other activities as are necessary for the sustenance of life and the fulfillment of legitimate obligations, instead of being interruptions or

violations of these principles, should be made opportunities of practicing them and putting them into actual service.

How can holiness and godliness and purity and faith be applied to office work and factory work and housework? Does it seem incongruous? If it does, there is something wrong—there is something warped and clouded about OUR VIEWPOINT. The command is—

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, AS UNTO THE LORD, and not to men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward" (Colossians 3:23).

We may get part of the reward now, a small meaningless part of it—enough to keep our bodies functioning—but the real reward is later. The less we get now, the more we have in store—THE MORE WE GET NOW, THE LESS WE HAVE IN STORE. Of some it is said, "Verily, they HAVE their reward."

This is a vitally important point. It lifts our daily work out of the dull mundane sphere of carnal things and brightens it with the opportunity of serving God in the Spirit while attending to necessary temporal burdens. John says (1 John 2:15-17)—

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

This is not an arbitrary prohibition. It is the guidance of wisdom. We are not taught arithmetic at school just to rob us of the pleasure of figuring incorrectly. That would be a childish, petulant way to view helpfully-intended instruction.

So with God's instruction. None of it is harsh or unnecessary. It is meant to help us—to put us on the right road to life and happiness and well-being in a real, permanent, substantial sense. John does not stop with the bare command; he gives the reason:

"All that is in the world is not of the Father"—it is alien and out of harmony—"The world passeth away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

The world passeth away and takes all its friends and participators with it. Its fellowship is the sinister fellowship of death.

Many worldly things are not in themselves wrong. Many worldly acquaintances are not specifically wicked, but they all belong to a state of things that is ready to vanish away. To take part in their interests warps and cramps and beclouds our perception. We cannot hope to ever be part of a large and eternal heavenly order if we think small petty worldly thoughts.

The Old Testament chapter in the same daily readings (Isaiah 40) brings this even more vividly into focus. The prophet urges upon us a conception of God and the purpose of life that is overwhelming in its immensity. If we can, by a supreme effort, get in tune with His viewpoint, present things shrink into their true insignificance.

"Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure?" (v 12).

"Behold the nations are as the small dust of the balance."

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding" (v 28).

"Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created these things . . . by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power" (v 26).

This is the scale of conception that it is wholesome to dwell upon, and get away from the pettiness of our present surroundings. It is strengthening. It is uplifting. It engenders a sober, godly frame of mind.

This is the true state of affairs. The world but a handful of dust—its troubled history an insignificant fraction of eternity—the seemingly real and actual present but a brief interlude that will pass like shadows before the rising sun.

This is the sphere of thought that is comforting and worthwhile. Keeping our minds in this channel will result in a course of action in harmony with these things and which will fit us for a place in them.

We are told by well-meaning but worldly-minded counselors that if we want a better position we must fit ourselves for it. We must fill our thoughts with its responsibilities and requirements. We must, as it were, mentally live in that sphere and accustom ourselves to it.

Now of course this is entirely out of the question for those whose minds, in obedience to the counsel of the Apostle, are wholly given to better things—they just haven't the time for it—but it illustrates the effort we must make on a higher and more satisfying scale. Often, sadly enough, the children of this world show more wisdom and initiative and energy in their aspirations than the children of light do in things eternal.

The human mind is not bound to its immediate surroundings. If it were so, life would often become unbearable. But consciousness is largely made up of memory and hope, beside that which is present to the senses.

Many people choose their solace by living in the past, comforting themselves with reminiscence and recollection, escaping monotonous or unpleasant reality by absorption in what is gone.

Most are wrapped up in the immediate present and the very limited future which comes within the scope of present undertakings. But such a course does not satisfy the contemplative mind. "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die" is the universal doctrine, but only the shallowest, dullest minds can find merriment satisfying under such circumstances. Such an attitude requires the cruelest, bitterest form of self-deception and willful blindness.

But, in the mercy of God, there is a third alternative for those who feel the need. How is one brought to feel the need? By a recognition of the sadness and perversions of the present dispensation, due to the incapability and inhumanity and physical frailty of man. Is this brought home to us easily or quickly? Usually not. At first the world is a place of bright promise, of comradeship and love, of gay and thoughtless adventure. This is the impression of inexperience's innocence and buoyancy.

How do we learn differently? What prompts us to turn for comfort and satisfaction elsewhere? Usually it requires the rough hand of misfortune and disillusionment to make us fully appreciative of the vanity of present things. We are aware, it is true, of the vast preponderance of sorrow over joy in the world, but we feel nobody's troubles as keenly as we do our own. This is in the very nature of things. Our minds can only work on what is being continually presented to them in some form or another. Unless constantly reminded either by circumstances or direct efforts of our own will, we soon forget, and our attention is taken by other things.

This, too, demonstrates why we must constantly supply our minds with material for thought from the Word of God. If we don't, our minds will feed on other and unwholesome things that so easily present themselves to them.

What is the course of mental satisfaction that is offered, to counteract the depressing effect of present considerations?

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned" (Isaiah 40:1).

Such are the opening words of the reading from Isaiah. "Her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned." These things have been recorded for over 26 hundred years—and the end is not yet. Some may be reminded, perhaps a little bitterly, of the statement by Paul to the Romans (4:17) that:

"God calleth things which be not as though they were already."

Clearly there could be no more striking example. To speak assuringly of warfare being over when it still had a cruel course of over two thousand years to run may seem poor and misleading comfort—but is this the truth of the matter? Thoughtful consideration shows this but a narrow, unreasonable viewpoint.

Comfort depends upon the state of the mind. The comfort offered by the Scriptures is not dependent upon immediate fulfillment. It is the assurance of an ultimate reign of peace and good, that is separated from no individual by more than the brief span of a human life-time. Its comfort is not that distress is finished, but that distress is a controlled and necessary ingredient of the final result.

This is the viewpoint that prophet and apostle exhort us to maintain. We must live in patience and godliness, buoyed up by hope. We must center our minds resolutely upon that which is to come and face all present troubles in the confidence of this expectation. "Sorrow endureth for the night," says the Psalmist—and the night may be long—"but joy cometh in the morning." The course of wisdom is not to ignore or belittle the sorrow, but to balance the whole picture. We shall not be overwhelmed by the one if the other is kept brightly in mind.

Then we can enter into the spirit of these words of Isaiah and reap the comfort intended. We are not to regard the delay with skeptical impatience or lagging faith, but we are to build our lives and hopes upon these things in the

quiet and calm confidence that they represent the realities and that in God's good time all will be accomplished.

V. 6 – "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?"—What good tidings is there?—"All flesh is grass. The grass withereth . . . surely the people is grass."—Where is hope?

This is the thoughtful, but purely natural, view. It sees things only as they appear and leaves out the most important feature. V. 8 answers: Truly "the grass withereth"—truly present things are a shadow—

"BUT the Word of our God shall stand forever . . . Lift up thy voice with strength; Lift it up, be not afraid. Say, Behold your God! Behold He will come and His reward is with Him."

Then the chapter breaks into the long, exalted eulogy to the power and greatness and unchangeableness of God, of which we have spoken. What is its purpose? To raise and broaden the mortal conception of the meaning and purpose of life. To train the mind into channels that give a proportioned outlook.

The human mind can be engrossed in the meanest and most trivial matters, or it can be devoted to the highest and loftiest considerations of divinity and holiness. The natural tendency of gravity pulls it downward, but the magnetism of the Spirit draws it upward.

As the mind thinks, so it becomes. A man is but the aggregation of his own thoughts. Therefore sons of Adam may be transformed into sons of God by a gradual displacement of the natural by the spiritual.

Every spiritual thought is an ingredient of the new creature—a strengthening of the spirit—a step towards life.

Therefore, says Paul (Philippians 4:8): "Whatsoever things are true, lovely, gracious and just, THINK on these things."

—and thereby gradually become like them. John continues—

"Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3).

"Be ye holy," we are commanded (1 Peter 1:16): "for He is holy." Cleanliness, holiness, purity—these are attributes of entirety. A man is not clean if he is partly dirty. Half pure means impure. Perfection is demanded. Jesus said—

"Be ye therefore PERFECT, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

"BE YE PERFECT." How can we be PERFECT?

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

But it is not a perfect obedience that is expected. Our perfection is a gift, not a personal accomplishment, for John goes on to explain (1:9)—

"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and CLEANSE us from all unrighteousness."

"If we walk in light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

This is the secret of perfection. We cannot approach Him acceptably unless we are clean and pure in His sight. The Law of Moses teaches us this. Therefore we must at all times maintain our purity from worldly thought and contact by the merciful cleansing of humble repentance and forgiveness.

And so we meet together clean and pure and perfect and acceptable before Him—not sinless, but repeatedly washed from sin. How merciful a provision—but let us never abuse it. Should we regard sin with less fear, because God cleanses us so freely? "God forbid!" says the Apostle Paul (Romans 6:2). Rather should His mercy be an incentive to greater effort.

It is a grave and solemn calling—the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Tremendous privileges—tremendous responsibilities. Of him who treats it lightly, it will at the last be said: "Better were it for that man if he had never been born."

Bro. G.V. Growcott

At The Master's Feet

How do we read the Lord Jesus' discourse upon the Mount? (Matthew 5-7) Do we consider it an ideal, things true and wonderful but unattainable in this life? Or do we see the Master's words as an emanation of the Divine nature which if we are not partakers of now then we shall not escape the corruption that is in the world by coveting.

Here in Matthew 5-7 is the unfathomable reaches of the Eternal spirit enthroned in light unapproachable. That which no man could see, Yahweh by His grace expressed in the simplest description for the purpose of making plain the reality of the accompanying joy and happiness of the perfect man it describes.

This description not only reveals the glory of God but shows the unspeakable happiness of Him Who revealed it, can also be the experience of all those who come and sit at His feet. Those who learn to ask, through every facet of life (which the words of their Lord here upon the Mount are designed to portray), "What is the will of God?"

During each step of their probation this question directs their mind back to the Eternal spirit made plain in this man. Not to this man alone however for we see His disciples at His feet absorbed in the discourse which portrays in a word picture, the reality of a multitude separated from the masses by their love, devotion and desire to know what is God's will. A manifestation which in its perfecting will without exception bear the Divine imprint of the mind of Christ. A mind which Bro. Growcott emphatically states can and must now be, "learned, practiced, perfected anywhere, anytime and under any circumstance."

Northwest of the Sea of Galilee in the region of Capernaum, Galilee of the Nations, the people who were walking in darkness saw a great light, dwellers in a land death - shadowed upon them the light shone.

While multitudes restlessly waited at the base of the Mount for the rising up of Jesus of Nazareth, His disciples ascended the Mount and sat at His feet.

“A prophet will I (Yahweh) raise up unto them out of the midst of their brethren like unto thee, - and I will put My words in His mouth, so shall He speak unto them whatsoever I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass that the man who will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My Name, I Myself will require it of him.” (Deuteronomy 18 Rotherhams Translation)

The apostle Peter in quoting these words in Acts 3, makes a spirit guided alteration, “Every soul whatsoever which shall not hearken unto that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.”

Peter here at the end of the above quote sites Yahweh’s words to Abraham (Genesis 17) concerning the fate of those who did not bear in their flesh the token of the covenant made to Abraham and links it to those who would not hearken to the Christ.

In Genesis 17 we note that to the covenant of promise, even the “everlasting covenant,” was added the covenant of circumcision. It was the token of that which was already made, “an institution,” says Dr. Thomas, “of God that was appointed as a memorial of His promise concerning the everlasting possession of Canaan and the world; and of that righteousness by faith of the promise which could alone entitle to it: and which was to express the faith of those who practiced it...It is circumcision of the heart of which circumcision of the flesh is but the sign of the circumcised heart of Abraham, that confers a title to the land and all its attributes.” (Elpis Israel pp. 246-247)

The apostle Paul therefore reasons, “So, if a man is uncircumcised but keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision...For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.” (E.S.V. Romans 2)

We sit at the feet of the Greater than Moses Who is the mediator of the New Covenant which has better promises, a greater sacrifice and therefore we have a far greater measure of responsibility than those who sat at Moses’ feet. A responsibility bearing upon the heart, the motive and the disposition whether these have been influenced and transformed by the spirit of Christ’s teachings.

“Now this is the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the sons of Israel, - before his death. And he said - Yahweh from Sinai came near, - Yea He dawned out of Seir upon them, He shone forth out of Mount Paran, Yea He came out of holy myriads, - Out of his right hand proceeded a fiery law to guide them. Yea he loved his people. All his holy ones were in thy hand, - Yea they were encamped at thy feet, Each one bare away some of thy words.

A law did Moses command us - a possession for the convocation of Jacob.” (Deuteronomy 33 Rotherhams Translation)

This remarkable scene is prophetic of two remote epochs, though inseparably linked. One remains in our future and the other, this moment we are contemplating with the disciples at the feet of Christ upon the Mount.

Moses blessed the people who sat and listened because he loved them, for scriptural “meekness” is teachableness, a willingness to hear, as it is written, “Yahweh will teach sinners in the way. The meek will He guide in judgement: and the meek will He teach His way.” (Psalm 25)

What was the result of this teachableness? Moses anticipates the answer, “How happy art thou O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people victorious in Yahweh?” (Deuteronomy 33 Rotherhams Translation) “This is the victory which overcometh the world even our faith.”

So Moses took those who would hear, beyond law to the eternal Christ spirit which the law was designed as a schoolmaster to bring them. Giving those who would hear a far more compelling and transforming motive than law keeping as the means of participating in this victory in Yahweh - this unspeakable happiness.

“Yahweh thy Elohim (He who shall be mighty ones) will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Yahweh thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” (Deuteronomy 30)

In fulfillment of this remarkable prophetic scene the Lord Jesus Christ “began to teach saying: Happy the destitute in spirit; For theirs is the kingdom of the heavens: Happy they who mourn; For they shall be comforted: Happy the meek; For they shall inherit the earth: Happy they who hunger and thirst for righteousness; For they shall be filled: Happy the merciful; For they shall receive mercy: Happy the pure in heart; For they shall see God...”

The Lord shows this happiness is contingent on overcoming the mind of the flesh, which is the very antithesis of reverential fear. Happy are they who find comfort in God as their true abiding place, whose ears are opened day and night to receive the spirit’s instruction and hunger and thirst for God. By His truth and its comprehension become manifestations of the Divine grace in the spirit of holiness.

How different was the mind of the Pharisees who manifested that hardness of heart that endeavoured to wrest Deuteronomy 24 and make Moses’ regulation of existing divorce practices into a Divine sanctioned command!

The Lord Jesus in Matthew 19 states that the motive behind the men of Israel insisting on this practice was hard-heartedness (Greek “sklenokardia”). It denotes their stubbornness, obstinacy and perverseness. It indicates man’s condition in his bearing toward God and how the revelation of His grace ought to have had a willing and receptive manifestation in his heart.

This principle is recorded in Proverbs 28:14, “Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.”

The Lord always returns to the basic question, what is God’s will as the directive of life. In this case He returns to the Genesis account and states, “But from the beginning it was not so.” (Matthew 19:8) The Revised Version translates the Greek, “But from the beginning it hath not been so.” That is, from the beginning there was not such permission. Deuteronomy 24 only regulated Israel’s departure from the creation ordinance and in that process made those contemplating divorce to consider seriously the consequences of their action if they continued down that course.

Thus the original institution of marriage by God and its binding authority, which revealed God’s will had not been abrogated or even suspended by Yahweh’s sufferance of Israel’s hard-hearted practices. The Lord’s teaching in this chapter however emphasises the complete annulment of the Mosaic sufferance (Deuteronomy 24:1-3) while mentioning the one logical exception and takes the Disciple’s mind back to God’s original intent in the creation of marriage. The will of God was thus exalted as the only standard that should motivate the thinking of His children.

“What is the will of God?” must be the all encompassing thought of how we perceive the manifestation of God in our lives and ultimately whether we are “known of God.” As it is written, “Not everyone that saith unto me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.”

What is God’s will that we should do? The eternal Christ spirit answers, “Lo, I come to do thy will O God...” “By the which will,” Paul adds, “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.”

The obedient subjection to God’s will by Christ left Paul in no doubt what this meant personally for Him - “I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

“And this is the Father’s will,” said the Master, “which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day.” (John 6)

To appreciate this “will” of God not just in a mechanical, legalistic observance but by an entering into the feelings of God through the tenderness of Christ. The way in which He has performed that will must have its counterpart in every intelligence that comprehends the multitudinous unity of “eyes” of the Cherubim seen by Ezekiel.

We must therefore do all we can to seek and save that which is lost while never losing sight of the holiness of God and the work of the Man in Linen as the manifestation of God’s righteousness. Who at last separates eternally those who “sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done” and those who in the imagery of their minds have all kinds of idols. Let us be among that class who sit at His feet, absorb His words and bear them away as an eternal inheritance.

2Peter 2 and 3

The overwhelming message of these last two chapters of Peter’s second epistle is: those who believe in the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, who know the Truth, are subject to falling away and returning to the ways of the world, and ultimately death.

Peter warns us, in the first three verses, to be cautious of the false teachers among you. Like in the days of the Old Testament Prophets, these false prophets will not outwardly oppose the Truth, but will mingle error with the Truth, secretly falsifying doctrine and leading some away. They will deny the only redeemer of man, Christ Jesus. Some in the Truth will follow these false teachers, and their lustful ways, therefore, being a bad example of those who are to walk after the spirit. They therefore give the Truth a bad name.

We can associate this with someone who says, “Do as I say not as I do.” We should give no occasion to an enemy to speak evil of us, or the Truth. These false teachers will use you for their own personal gain, whether it be of a monetary gain or one of notoriety. However successful and prosperous these false teachers may be, they are already condemned, and God’s wrath abideth on them.

Verse 4 is a wrested verse that many in Christendom have manipulated to suit their beliefs and would have required some time to delve into.

God’s wrath on the wicked people of Noah’s and Lot’s generations in verses 5-7 has its examples to consider. They ate, drank, and married, with no regard for God or the examples of Noah and Lot, and they were destroyed. This shows God’s assertion on those who oppose Him.

In verse 8 we read that Lot was vexed, or in pain, from day to day with the people’s unlawful deeds in Sodom and Gomorrah. We now live in a time of Godlessness just like Sodom and Gomorrah. Are we dulled by all the evil around us as those of Sodom? Brethren & Sisters, are we vexed day by day by all the Godless conversation, just as Lot? If not, maybe we are of the world a little too much, and we need to refocus, and beware of the warnings Peter is telling us in these chapters. But we see if we follow God’s ways, He is able to deliver us from evil. Lot was a just man and God delivered him from that godless city. The Lord knows our hearts; He protects those who are progressing in their walk and has limitless ways to deliver His people from evil. I hope that our efforts will establish us firmly in God’s plan when He sends His only begotten.

Verse 10 states, “But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.” These, who walk after the flesh, despise government and speak evil of those whom God has put in authority. God rules in the kingdom of men. But even the angles, who are more powerful, do not bring railing accusations before God against His appointed ones.

This reminds me of David and his love and respect for Saul, who was God's appointed one. We should respect God's decision for placing certain people over us. He is all-knowing, even to the end, and there is a purpose for all that God does. This may be to mold our character to His pleasing and His purpose.

In the final verses of chapter 2, Peter warns us of the character and conduct of these false teachers. They serve the flesh, they act without thinking, and they despise all authority. They enjoy their wicked ways, and are not afraid to speak evil. Their eyes are never satisfied; they try to satisfy every whim. These actions will not only bring eternal death, but very often misery in this life. The desire of wealth and temporary things is forsaking the way of righteousness, which leads us away from God. Like Balaam, who for a price, compromised the high honor God had given him. These false teachers lead people into traps of wantonness—traps that they are in themselves. They are not free, for they walk by sight and not by faith.

There are some who by the knowledge of Jesus will temporarily find freedom from the worldly ways only to return to their evil ways. Peter says, "For it had been better for them not to have known the ways of righteousness." They become worse off than before.

In verse 21, Peter says to turn not from the Holy commandment. The Holy commandment Peter speaks of here is "the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." To know this is to be accountable, and having been washed clean only to return to our old ways is offensive to God. To us, it is as a dog who returns to his own vomit.

In chapter 3:1-2, Peter used the term "beloved." He calls them beloved! He openly shows his love and sincere concern for them. We are to love one another and bear one another's burdens. We are our brother's keeper.

He continues, "in which I stir up (Greek wake fully) your pure (sincere) minds." Wake up, maybe wake each other up? Perhaps that is why we gather here each year, to remember the words of the prophets and the apostles and the commandments of Christ. By remembrance, retain the Truth in its most sincere way.

Then Peter reiterates, in verses 4-7, his warning to us of the Godless people to come in the last days. He says that they will mock those who walk after the Spirit. These godless people will laugh at sin and live their lives according to the flesh. Nay-sayers (unbelievers) mocking Christ's return to the earth and ruling for a millennium. These are people ignorant of the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which are undoubtedly still to be fulfilled. They say he has delayed for so long, He is not coming. They see man and the earth as it has been for centuries. They are ignorant of the fact that, by God's word, the heavens and the earth were established, are sustained now, and will be cleansed by His mighty hand. It will be cleansed of the godless men presently upon it.

Verses 8 and 14 – But God is patient. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." He is patient and longsuffering with us, which allows us time to work out our salvation with trembling and fear. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Let us not allow a day to go by that we don't recognize the precious gift that has been offered to us. Let us always be on our guard against the worldly ways, the false doctrines, and the carnal living, which provoke God. Let us pray He does not turn us over to a reprobate mind. For Christ will come "as a thief in the night" to those who are not watching and waiting. We should be eager with anticipation, and our lamps well oiled for the coming of our Lord and Savior, and the new name and life to be bestowed upon those who are to be found worthy, blameless and without spot, and the earth restored to the garden of the Lord.

Verse 11 – Knowing these things, that all we see is not permanent, and that this present life is nothing compared to the next, we should strive to be more sincere and humble, and make it our great object of desire, to be prepared for the return of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus.

We can learn many lessons from Peter. Notice verse 15, his love for Paul, his brother in Christ. Peter regards Paul as an authority of the scriptures by the wisdom God gave him. Though openly reproved by Paul, Peter openly shows His love for Paul, like David's love for Saul.

Then Peter says, verse 16, that some scripture is difficult to understand, and many are led away by a false understanding unto their own destruction. Therefore, knowing this, we should prove true all things by the whole Bible.

Peter closes with, "beloved...beware...", showing his loving and sincere concern. He cautions us again to beware, knowing these things from before, that we can be seduced from the Truth, and that wrested scriptures by unlearned men may lead us away. Do not follow the evil ways of the people around us. Beware and stay strong in the faith. Only the words of the prophets and apostles and the knowledge of Christ's commandments should be our guide to stay steadfast in our faith.

Verse 18 – "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." To become more like him and thus endear him to us is a process, not an immediate overcoming. Let us persevere, and grow together, dearly beloved, in the bonds of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. And the glory be to Him forever.

Bro. Dan Lorquet

Spring Water

The following lesson from nature reminds us of the need to always ask for the old paths (Jeremiah 6:16): "The nearer the spring head - the clearer the water; the further off, the muddier, and the more encumbered with extraneous matters in solution."

Bro. John Thomas - The Herald (1860)

Tables of Stone Written With The Finger of God

God gave these tables of stone to Moses, when he had made an end of speaking with him upon the mountain of Sinai. The two tables of the testimony - tables of stone, written with the finger of God. Do we have these tables written with the finger of God? What are these? SCRIPTURE-WORD-BIBLE. All scripture is inspired by God and profitable, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. How did Moses get these tables and where?

The Lord said to Moses "come up to me on the mountain, and wait there and I will give you the tables of stone with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction." Brethren and sisters can you devout to God's work? Foe being away for instructions without eat and drink for forty days and forty nights? Moses did, he stayed with the Lord forty days and forty nights, he neither ate bread nor drunk water. God wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. In our present times we have Bible Schools. Have you ever attended one that your ecclesia has arranged? If yes, what did you do after? "These words the Lord spoke to all the assemblies at the mountain out of the midst of fire, the cloud and the thick darkness with a loud voice and he added no more. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone and gave them to me." Deuteronomy 5:22. Therefore brethren and sisters, we should not preach Christ from envy and rivalry. Paul said, "it is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or death." Philemon 1:20.

Paul, still speaking, shows that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone, but on stone tables of human hearts. Brethren and sisters, "do not lie to one another seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practice which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator because he destined us in love to be his sons and daughters through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will. He has delivered us from dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son." Colossians 1:13. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for Good works which God prepared before hand, that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10 "And all might and authority and power and dominion and above all every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come." Ephesians 1:21

The Bible is free to all to be read upon. Why are others not reading it and understanding? Because the Lord poured out upon them a spirit of deep sleep and has closed their eyes. They have become to them like the words of a book when men give it to one. Read this. He says, I cannot, and they give the book to one who cannot read saying, Read this. He says I cannot read. "Let the Lord say because this people drew near with me their mouth and honor me with their lips while their hearts are far from me." Their fear of me is a

commandment of men learned by rote Isaiah 29:10-12. And verse 16 says you turn things upside down. "Shall the potter be regarded as the clay that the things made should say of its maker. He did not make me or the things made say of him who formed it. He has no understanding?" God saying, "Oh my people, your leaders mislead you and confuse the course of your paths." Isaiah 3:12.

Brethren and sisters, read the Bible daily, as we daily eat our food.

Bro. Philip Wekati.

Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh-EHYEH='I WILL BE'-not-'I AM'

THE 'NAMES' OF GOD predicts His multitudinous Elohim. EXODUS 3:13-14: "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you: and they shall say unto me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them?"

And God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM": and He -said, "-Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

But 'I AM THAT I AM' is not the right rendering of the words, EHYEH ASHER EHYEH. The words do not express THE PRESENT='I AM', but express THE FUTURE='I WILL BE'.

Just prior to the time of Bro. Thomas, Hebrew grammarians were understanding that EHYEH indicated THE FUTURE='I WILL BE', and not THE PRESENT='I AM'.

But this true rendering can be traced back, a lot further back, than the time of Bro. Thomas, even 900 years back, even to the time of the renowned Hebrew translator\commentator, Rashi, who translated EHYEH as 'I WILL BE', and not 'I AM'.

Though it is quite evident that EHYEH should be translated 'I WILL BE', yet orthodox Christian writers & preachers & commentators, rather than dropping 'I AM' from their remarks on the matter, retain the incorrect, orthodox Christian sense of 'I AM', while combining with it the true Christian sense of 'I WILL BE'.

The New KJV of the Bible keeps in the text the saying, 'I AM WHO I AM'. In one Bible of the NKJV, there is a note that teaches: "This name for God points to His self existence and eternity: it denotes, I am the one who is/will be". The writer, thereby, wants the words to refer to THE PRESENT (is) = 'I AM', and refer to THE FUTURE (will be) = 'I WILL BE'.

A note in another Bible teaches this: "I am that (who or what) I am, or, I am the self existing one: the one who always has been & always will be". Again, as in the note above from the NKJV, this writer also wants the words to refer to GOD-PRESENT & GOD-FUTURE, when he says, God is "the one who always has been", = the 'I AM', "and always will be" = 'I WILL BE'.

One last one! This regular Christian puts this orthodox doctrine on `I AM', in these words:

"The description of the Father shows eternal existence in the past (was), present (is), and future (is to come)."

It is observed that EHYEH should be, `I WILL BE':

"Out of over 40 other occurrences of this first person, singular number, future tense of the verb, in such a grammatical position as to make it allowable to draw a comparison with this verse, there is only one sentence of `EHYEH' being rendered `I AM' in the A.V. We have `I WILL BE' 27 times, & the remaining occurrences represented by `will I be', I shall be', etc."

Bro. Nick Mammone

ANTHEM 32

We live in a glorious sphere, whose ordinances are based in the highest beneficence. The grandeur of the glittering firmament on high; the overpowering glory of the splendid sun in the heavens; the softness and benignancy of the "blue ethereal sky;" the pleasant play of light in its infinite variations of color and shade; the invigorating rush of the healthful breeze; the charming fragrance of opening flowers; the beauty of earth's variegated carpet; the pleasure of every healthful function—in fact, the whole paraphernalia of being, reveals the fact that the creating, sustaining, and presiding Genius of heaven and earth is the good and wise and gracious being revealed to the fathers of the house of Israel.

When to all these we add the promise of life everlasting, a nature incorruptible, society joyful and ennobling, a kingdom unfading, we can see what reason we have for joining—and that rapturously, too, in the exultation of David—

"I WILL EXTOL THEE, MY GOD, O KING, AND I WILL BLESS THY NAME FOR EVER AND EVER. EVERY DAY WILL I BLESS THEE, AND I WILL PRAISE THY NAME FOR EVER AND EVER. GREAT IS THE LORD, AND GREATLY TO BE PRAISED, AND HIS GREATNESS IS UNSEARCHABLE."—Psalm 145:1-2

Bro. Robert Roberts

DANIEL – THE KINGS OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH (continued from last month)

"The matter of the vision concerning the taking away of the daily was made known to Daniel in the first year of Darius, B.C.542. Three years after – that is, in the third of the joint reign of Cyrus and Darius – "a thing was revealed" to him, "the appointed time" of which "was long." In connection with this revelation, or prophecy, "a vision" was

also presented before him. It was a representation of the Son of Man in his glory. After he had recovered the overpowering effect caused by what he saw, he was informed by one that he came to make him understand what should befall Israel in the latter days (Dan.10:14). In carrying out this gracious intention, the revelatory added furthermore that he would show him "that which is noted in the scriptures of truth;" by which he meant, he would make known to him what yet remained to be communicated explanatory of the vision of the Ram and He-Goat, which he had seen in the third year of Belshatzar. The Lord then proceeded to reveal the things contained in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Daniel." (Elpis Israel page 396)

As we commence a review of the eleventh chapter of Daniel, we recall the words written in the last article by Bro Roberts to the effect that the fulfilment of this chapter is so remarkable and so accurate, that the unbeliever is forced to the (false) conclusion that it is a forgery, written after the events were accomplished. There are no lengths, of course, to which the unbeliever will stoop in the attempt to undermine the Bible. It was so in the days of Bro Roberts, and it is more so today. However, the loud cries of the sceptic are like the "pecking of seagulls on the adamantine rocks" as Bro Roberts once described the Higher Critics. The various prophecies contained in the Word of God, and even the literary composition of the Word itself, prove over and over again that the Book we know as the Bible is, and can only be, divine – the work of inspiration.

Daniel chapter 11 is not a forgery. The facts are altogether against such a conclusion. Unfortunately, the unbeliever has no relish for examining the facts in a fair and logical way. Their mind is made up, and no amount of reason can alter their thinking. The facts however are there all the same, and we may, God Willing, make reference to the information provided by Bro Roberts in a later article in proof of the authenticity of this part of Daniel's book. For the time being however, we will content ourselves with looking at the prophecy itself.

As indicated in the last article, the basis of Daniel chapter 11 is the two horns of the Grecian Goat. Although there were four horns (representing the four generals that succeeded Alexander the Great), only two of them were important from a Biblical standpoint. They were important because their wars and intrigues were relative to the Holy Land. These are what the Scriptures designate as the King of the North and the King of the South.

The northern kingdom comprised much of Asia Minor and extended to the Indus, and the southern kingdom included Libya, Egypt, and Palestine. Palestine being between these power blocks suffered from both sides.

We also referred in our last article to the fact that a significant amount of historical detail is contained in this chapter, and it will be difficult to expound it all. Bro Thomas provides a verse by verse exposition of most of this chapter in Elpis Israel (and Exposition of Daniel) which can be referred to for

a full account of the events. Bro Roberts also expounds it in his book “Daniel and His Great Fulfilled Prophecy of Chapter Eleven”. We will however, produce as much information as will enable the ideas to be understood.

An overview of chapters 11 and 12

In Elpis Israel (page 398), Bro. Thomas provides an extremely interesting and informative paraphrase of Daniel chapter 11, from verse 2 to verse 35. It is also contained in The Exposition of Daniel (page 48).

It is often useful however, to give an overview of a subject first of all, before looking at the finer details of the chapter. Bro Thomas does this for us in both of these expositions. The details below are culled from a review of both books. We will reproduce the overview first, and then look at the verses a little more closely, using the referred to expositions to a large extent. Bro Roberts’ work (Daniel’s and His Great Fulfilled Prophecy) also contains a detailed exposition of the eleventh chapter, which we will also use in this review. We will therefore quote from these writings to a large extent, and without necessarily stating that we are actually quoting. The reading of these pioneer works are really recommended for an in depth study. We will only scratch the surface!

The following then is the basic structure of these last two chapters of Daniel:

1. verse 2 – contains details of the pushing of the Ram westward against Greece in the reign of the fourth king after Cyrus.

2. verses 3 & 4 – describe the power of Alexander, and the division of his kingdom into four lesser ones.

3. verses 5 to 35 – provides the revelation relating to the Greco-Egyptian, and to the Assyro-Macedonian, horns of the Goat, styled “the king of the south,” and “the king of the north;” (a) v5-29 the mutual rivalries, wars, and policy of the northern and southern horns of the Goat; (b)v30-33 the indignation of the northern horn against Judah, Jerusalem, and the evening-morning sacrifice; (c)v34-35 the help the Jews experienced under the Asmoneans till they were subjected to the Little Horn of the Goat, or “nation of fierce countenance, whose tongue they did not understand.”

4. verses 36 to 39 – is the prophecy relating to the Little Horn of the Goat and the Accursed One whom he should acknowledge and increase with glory.

5. verse 40 – refers to the time of the end, or “the latter days” when the “king of the south,” and “the king of the north,” should re-appear on the stage of action, and the power of the little horn, and that of the king of the north, should coalesce, and from one power, as when the Roman and Assyro-Macedonian were blended together, B.C 67.

6. verses 41 to 45 – outlines the invasion of the land of Israel by the little horn’s northern king, who over-runs Egypt, and finally encamps before the holy mountain.

7. chapter 12 – is the final destruction of the little horn’s northern king at the hand of Michael, the great prince of Israel, their consequent deliverance, the resurrection of many of the dead, and the exaltation of the wise in the kingdom of God.

Verse 2

The information in this verse has been examined previously. It relates to the Persian Empire, and has been paraphrased as follows:

“Behold, there shall stand up three kings in Persia ,namely, Ahasuerus, Smerdis, and Darius: and the fourth, or Xerxes, shall be richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.”

Xerxes was the richest of all the Persian monarchs. The leading event of his reign was the fitting out of an immense naval and military expedition against Greece. This was the beginning of a war that lasted through several Persian reigns, and ended in the Persian overthrow.

Verses 3 and 4,

Again, we have considered in some detail the “mighty king” who would stand up, and “rule with great dominion, and do according to his will” (verse 3). This was Alexander the Great, the “great horn” of the Goat that is detailed in chapter 8. He trampled down the power of Persia and established an immense empire that reached as far as India. During his short life, he ruled this area with despotic authority.

Verse 4 also relates to Alexander the Great and goes on to record:

“And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up even for others besides those.”

When Alexander had finished the conquest of India and returned to Babylon, he came to a premature end at a drunken feast. His empire after a regency of 13 years, was then partitioned among his four generals. These were Ptolemy Soter, Seleucus, Lysimachus and Cassander. None of these however were family relations of Alexander, thus fulfilling this particular part of the prophecy that “his kingdom shall be plucked up even for others besides those”, that is, they were not “of his posterity.” Alexander had a son (also named Alexander) who was born after his death. However, he was murdered with his mother (Roxana) at the age of thirteen by Cassander.

Alexander did have a brother (Philip Aridaeus). He would have had a legal right to the kingdom, but he, and his wife (Eurydice) were murdered by Alexander’s mother (Olympias) a few years after the death of Alexander (the Great). She was later murdered by Cassander.

With regards to the generals, Ptolemy Soter became king of Egypt, or “King of the South,” in relation to Palestine at that time; and Seleucus became

King of Syria, or “King of the North.” As remarked in a previous article, these were the Kings that become the subject of Daniel chapter 11.

(To be continued next month)

Bro. Phillip Hughes

Ignorance

If ignorance were bliss, God would not have troubled himself to reveal so much to make us wise. - Bro. John Thomas

SIGNS AND EVENTS

FRENCH ATTACK ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES: A law banning any public expression of religious belief has been passed in France. This is said to include wearing of the headscarf by Moslem women, wearing of yamulkas by Jews and exhibiting of the crucifix in Catholic schools. Clearly this will be seen as a form of religious persecution and interference in basic liberties harking back to medieval times. It seems to be motivated by concerns over the Islamic tidal wave sweeping Europe. There are now five million in France, and whereas there was only one mosque in 1970, there are now 1,000. In spite of this, this appears to represent a serious threat to civil and religious liberties, and basically amounts to an “anti-religious” piece of legislation. It could go further and forbid assemblies or even outlaw religious beliefs, including the Bible. This has to be an issue to watch, as it may spread to other EU countries and will almost certainly provoke a backlash in extremist action against French government institutions.

TZAR PUTIN: This is the description applied by The Times to Vladimir Putin, declaring that he is "the most popular Russian leader since Peter the Great". Elections are due in March and Putin is expected to receive a landslide victory with approval ratings close to 80 per cent. His popularity stems from his "straight-talking style and KGB background approach to a population yearning for strong central control." The article commented that the Kremlin's doctrine of "managed democracy" has given Putin too much power. Western governments are beginning to worry that Russia is "lurching away from the democratic values it embraced after the Soviet Union's collapse and back towards the despotism that has plagued its history." A Russian scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace commented, "I don't even know why people still talk about managed democracy. They should take out the democracy bit".

CHANGES IN THE MIDDLE EAST: As the year 2003 drew to a close, Britain's Daily Telegraph published an interesting account of possible

movements amongst the nations of the Middle East consequent upon the fall of Saddam Hussein and the decision of Colonel Gaddafi to dismantle Libya's secret nuclear development. A map detailing all the nations surrounding Israel accompanied the article. The area is a hotbed of potential warfare with Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iran and Israel all in possession of ballistic missiles. Chemical and biological weapons have been developed by Libya, Egypt, Syria and Israel, whilst Iran and Sudan are reported to possess chemical weaponry capabilities. Both Iran and Israel have ambitious nuclear programmes.

The war in Iraq seems to have been the catalyst for Libya's action, as well as the long-awaited admission by Iran that it is capable of producing weapons-grade uranium and plutonium. British officials are hopeful that these events "point to the beginnings of other changes that may transform the region". Three of the Middle East nations appear to be making moves towards a more co-operative attitude to the West. Sudan, which was once home to Osama bin Laden, "is close to concluding a western-mediated peace agreement to end its long-running civil war". Saudi Arabia is "gently accelerating the painfully slow process of political reform towards a more democratic society". It is fervently hoped that Iran may now be encouraged to "step up its co-operation with the West" following their restoration of diplomatic ties with Egypt after a 24-year break caused by Egypt's peace with Israel.

It has been reported that Libya has begun talks with Israel "as a first step that could lead to a peace agreement with Colonel Gaddafi". If this report were reliable, the deal would mark a complete change in relations. Colonel Gaddafi once suggested: "the Jewish State should be dismantled and its citizens transferred to Alaska. Alaska was suitable for Jews because it was a distant land, far away from religious wars". He added, "Palestine will be the graveyard of the Jews". Israeli officials reacted cautiously to the news of a change in relations, saying, "It remained to be seen whether the Libyan leader was serious about normalising ties and renouncing his past anti-Semitic rhetoric".

The report concluded: "the tentative Israel contacts with Libya are another sign that the Iraq war has transformed the diplomatic landscape".

The Times referred to these events, saying: "the new year has witnessed a blossoming of peace efforts in the Middle East not seen for more than a decade. Countries that have been locked in feuds for a quarter of a century have decided to put the past behind them. Others are offering to mediate longstanding disputes and for the first time a real debate has opened on

banning weapons of mass destruction throughout the entire heavily militarised region". The Times was also of the opinion that "the frenzy of activity in the region is largely credited to the aftermath of the war in Iraq and the effect of the capture of Saddam Hussein".

IRANIAN EARTHQUAKE: A terrible earthquake hit a historic town in Iran (Persia) in the closing days of December. One moment the city was a bustling, thronging metropolis, then seconds later it was annihilated, every building collapsing, killing approximately 50,000 people. Here is food for thought when we consider the forces of nature and geological upheaval that can be triggered in a moment right under our feet. We enjoy life from day to day, the comfort of our homes, food on the table and so forth, purely by God's grace, but how many stop and give Him due thanks and acknowledgement for His daily mercies that we behold from the rising to the setting of the sun, but which we so easily take for granted. It raises the question as to whether this disaster was sent from God? We know that God uses natural means to achieve political ends. He rules in the kingdoms of men. He does whatsoever He pleases to achieve the desired end. Bro. Thomas shows us that at the time of the 6th vial of the Apocalypse, will be a time of natural and political upheaval, prior to the coming of Christ in power and great glory.

This earthquake could have been triggered by bombs dropped in the Afghan or Gulf war, and hence, precipitated by man's own folly. What is certain is that this is a very unstable area in every sense and fomenting with Islamic fundamentalists fanatically opposed to Israel. This all acts and reacts adding to the seething cauldron, and reaping its own reward. But the ocean of suffering is awful to contemplate, touching everyone!

"Nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be in heaven. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring. Men's hearts failing them with fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21 v 11, 12 and 25). So the exhortation pronounced by the Lord himself to the nation on whom impending judgements of AD70 were about to be outpoured was "TAKE HEED"! "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch

ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things."

HUMAN MIND

The following quote has come to my attention in the last few days:

"The human mind cannot effectively hold both the word of god and the cares of the world; one or the other will ultimately be choked out".

Brethren and sisters, the household at large is starting to demonstrate in the deviation from the principles of truth, that they now occupy the sentiments we have been warned against by the apostles: "where is the promise of his coming?" The human mind is capable of wonderful things, but will only survive under one primary focus; either it will do well in the unchanneled direction of its natural desire (the easier of the two) or it will do well in the channeled direction of the Word of God. Let us be warned. If we think we are strong enough and clever enough to do both then let us think again! Bro. Thomas in his early years was an exceptionally clever medical doctor, but the records are clear in reference to how his occupation in that direction suffered on account of his efforts in the direction of the truth; it was not long before he abandoned his medical studies altogether and took less demanding jobs so that his focus was as a ploughman with a plough. Our calling is a high calling and we live in an age when we have much. The Scriptures are crystal clear on this point: "to whom much is given, much is required". Let us all then use our time wisely in the meditation of God's word; let us forsake all other interests however simple and seemingly innocent they may seem; let us be of the few when Christ returns who will have our lamps well trimmed and brightly burning! For those who overcome, will Christ bestow the gift of immortality and an inheritance in his kingdom, having power over the nations of the earth.

The question as always is: "are you ready"?

Bro. Stephen Male

The Deep Things of God: WISDOM

"Wisdom," says the Scripture, "is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thy head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."

If thou would'st, O reader, get this wisdom, happy art thou if thou findest it. "For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of

silver, and gain thereof then fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is everyone that retaineth her." Proverbs 3:14, 18

Before the Son of God sent forth His apostles to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom in His name, "He opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures." If thou would'st gain the knowledge of the wisdom of God which is so inestimable, and which is contained in the word they preached, thou must also be the subject of the same illumination. This is indispensable; for there is no obtaining of this commodity except through the Scriptures of Truth.

These "are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. For all Scripture given by inspiration of God is also profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2Timothy 3:15-17

What more dost thou want than perfection, and a crown of life and glory in the age to come? Search the Scriptures with the teachableness of a little child and thy labour will not be in vain. Cast away to the owls and to the bats the traditions of men and the prejudices indoctrinated into thy mind by their means; make a whole burnt offering of their creeds, confessions, catechisms and articles of religion; and, after the example of the Ephesian disciples, hand over your books of curious theological arts, and burn them before all" (Acts 19:19).

These mountains of rubbish have served the purposes of a dark and barbarous age; the word, the word of the living God alone, can meet the necessities of the times. Let the example of the noble minded Bereans be ours.

They searched the Scriptures daily to see if the things taught by the apostle were worthy of belief; "therefore they believed." Acts 17:12 If then not even the preaching of an apostle was credited unaccompanied by Scriptural investigation, is it not infinitely more incumbent on us that we should bring to a like test the opinions and precepts of the uninspired and fallible professional theologians of our day? Let us believe nothing that comes from the pulpit, the altar or the press, not demonstrated by the grammatical sense of the Scriptures. Let us be contented with nothing less than a "thus it is written" and a "thus saith the Lord;" who does not speak after this rule. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20 If then their light be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Bro. John Thomas

What Does That Mean?

"How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" (Psalm 13:1)

Why does it seem that God sometimes hides His face from the cries and petitions of His children?

The Bible gives several forthright replies to this question:

1. One reason is because sin is prevalent. Isaiah says, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity." (59:1-4) We are told in Proverbs that, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." (Proverbs 28:9)

2. Another reason we are given is because there is a lack of wholehearted devotion. James tells us, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James 1:6-8)

3. He may hide his face from us for a period as a means of chastening to prevent us from drifting further away. "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12:10-11)

4. The fourth reason we are given is probably the hardest for us to comprehend. It is to encourage our growth and development in the truth and to cause us to show forth God's honor and glory. Paul said, "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2Corinthians 12:8-10)

I think Peter sums the problem up very nicely for us when he writes, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:" (1Peter 1:6-8)