

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. Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom. Upholding the Truth as Bereans since 1923.

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Please send Ecclesial communications to:

Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich. 48035 U.S.A.

Phone: (586) 790-2156 Fax: (586) 790-8519 e-mail: fredhigham@ameritech.net

Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com

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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

LAS CRUCES, New Mexico, Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia, Memorial 11am; Key Lesson Bible Seminar 7pm; Mid-Week Bible Class; Wednesday 6pm; Tuesday & Thursday Bible Class 7:30pm; Bro. Michael Morrell, 301 North Roadrunner Parkway #309, Las Cruces, NM 88011; morrell@morrellcom.com Web Page <http://lascruces.bereans.org/main>; phone 505-312-1025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We praise Yahweh tonight together and thank him for calling out another from the world to become a brother in Christ. After a very good confession of faith during his interview for baptism we, tonight, baptized Anthony Ray Torres, of Las Cruces, New Mexico into the One Faith.

We welcome Bro. Tony into the Truth, and into the Berean Christadelphian Fellowship.

Bro. Tony is the son of Sister Lupe Ogaz, who is very joyful tonight with us. We pray to God that Bro. Tony will be blessed in his walk with us, hopefully expecting the return of Christ.

Love in the Truth,
Bro. Michael Morrell

Little Rock, Arkansas. Sunday: Memorial meeting, 9:30 am; Genesis study, 11 am. Wednesday: Eureka, 7:30 pm. Bro. Bob Widding, 4219 Kenyon, Little Rock, Arkansas 72205. Telephone 501-663-6104. E-mail: BibleJournal@aol.com.

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Anointed,
Loving greetings in the Hope of Israel,

During the past month we've enjoyed midweek visits from brother Michael Morrell of the Las Cruces Ecclesia, and sister Leah Morrell of the Boston Ecclesia. Also brother Fred Higham of the Detroit Ecclesia and brother Ted Mingham of the Brisbane, Australia Ecclesia.

Our Sunday morning Genesis class has been blessed with the regular attendance of two Bible students. Our earnest prayer is that the Deity might provide the increase, if such be in accordance with His will.

We wish to thank our brethren and sisters who attended the 2004 Hye Gathering for the thoughtful card.

Fraternally,
Bro. Bob Widding

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

CANTON BAYLOR BEACH PICNIC **Aug 28—29, 2004**

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

CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING **Oct 9—10, 2004**

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

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING **June 11—12, 2005**

Bro. Lee Freeburg, 200 Gabriel Forest, Georgetown, TX 78628, 512-869-2008

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING **July 25—31, 2005**

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 325-985-3868

Study Class Topics: Ephesians – Daily Bible Readings - Discussion

Hath Not God Made Foolish The Wisdom Of The World?

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." 1 Corinthians 1:19 -

Our readings in 1 Corinthians brought to our notice two kinds of wisdom.

1. Chapter 1:24 - "Christ...the Wisdom of God."
2. Chapter 1:20 - "The wisdom of this world."

Of the first kind, we are exhorted in the Proverbs: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore GET WISDOM; and with all thy getting, get understanding.

Of the other kind, Paul affirms to the Corinthians: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.." "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."

Both forms of wisdom are brought before us by Daniel in speaking of the time when -

"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise (that is, truly wise) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

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The increase of knowledge is to be one of the signs of the end. But we can see in Paul's writings that the apostolic age was pre-eminent in this respect too. We see in this first chapter of Corinthians that the Greeks sought after wisdom, and therefore the preaching of a crucified Christ by Paul was spurned by them. Paul admits his preaching of the Truth was not with enticing words of man's wisdom...that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God...not the wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, that come to nought.'

"That come to nought:" That is the difference between the wisdom of the World and the wisdom of the Truth. The wisdom of this world is very suddenly to come to nought. But the wisdom of Christ is soon to enter in across the bounds of eternity, ever expanding until it fills the whole earth as the waters cover the sea, for "Who can know the mind of God? or who has been His counselor?"

The system the world glorifies is the thinking of the flesh which is in almost every particular opposed to the mind of the Deity. Even the highest learning our age has to offer, gives only a scant knowledge of the past and the present based on what now exists. And for the most part all such is to be folded as a garment and laid aside when it has fulfilled its purpose of temporal existence, and the Wisdom of God that is in Christ is ushered in.

Before proceeding we would like to read the verses under consideration from the Diaglott: (1:19-30) - "For it has been written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will set aside the learning of the intelligent. Where is the wise man? Where a scribe? Where a disputant of this age? Did not God make foolish the wisdom of this world?"

"For when in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, God was pleased through the foolishness of this proclamation to save the believers.

"And although Jews are demanding signs, and the Greeks are seeking wisdom; yet we proclaim a crucified Christ; to the Jews, indeed, a stumbling block; and to the Gentiles foolishness; but to those who are invited, (both Jews and Greeks), Christ: the power of God, and the wisdom of God...for behold your invitation, brethren, that not many are wise according to the flesh, not many powerful, not many noble, but God selected the foolish things of the world, that he may shame the wise, and God selected the weak things of the world, that he may shame the powerful, the ignoble things of the world, and the things which are despised God selected....so that no flesh may boast in the presence of God...The Anointed Jesus became our wisdom...righteousness also, the sanctification, and 256 redemption."

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Our beloved brother Thomas speaks of the folly of man's wisdom:

"Man has replenished the earth and subdued it, and filled it with his renown. Man's crimes, rather than his virtues, have distinguished him above all other created things. Man's heart is evil; and left to its uncontrolled impulses, he is merciless and crueler than the fiercest beast of prey.

"Man has founded dominions, principalities, and powers; he has built great cities, and vaunted himself in the works of his own hands saying,

'Are not these by the might of My Power, and for the honour of My Majesty?'

Skilled in the wisdom that comes from beneath, he is by nature ignorant of that which is 'first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated.'

Man's wisdom is ruled by, and the result of, "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:"

Man's wisdom in these last days is lauded loudly by man - and even by some Christadelphians - but it is man's wisdom for all that. It has no power to deliver man from his death-stricken constitution. Human headship, human scope, human experience, human gratification is as far as it can reach. (And one day soon, if we are found faithful, we will be able to see the shortness of this human span.)

Left out of consideration is the fact that the earth is God's and the fullness thereof. That God rules in the puny affairs of men. God sets up over the human the basest among them. It is God that sets up and it is God that casts down. Man can go no farther than God allows.

Man was made for God's pleasure, and only in as much as man fulfills that purpose is there any wisdom in him.

The process of time will finally deprive man's wisdom of all its value. Then, how pitiful it will be for us, if we have spent effort and time acquiring it at the expense of Eternal things! But, if on the other hand, our time of sojourning has been invested in getting to know God better, and in serving the Lord Jesus Christ and his brethren, we will find ourselves the truly wise, - those who laid up treasure in heaven where neither moth or rust corrupted them.

Here I would like to quote a few words from brother Roberts on the subject before us. He says,

"Where are the Greeks who disputed with Paul? You will search creation in vain to find them. In due course they went the way of all flesh...Their knowledge and their presumptions have perished with them.

"But Paul sleeps in Christ' which is a very different thing. Paul is in the grave to be sure, but Christ is in heaven, and Paul is a reality to the mind of Christ; and when Christ, endowed with all controlling power in heaven and in earth, arrives in this part of the boundless dominions of the Father,

"Who has given him power over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as belong to him, the exercise of his power will reorganize the scattered dust of Paul, and Paul will step forth unhurt by his long sleep, to realize the result of his faith and labour in a physical invigoration which he never experienced in the days when he groaned, being burdened. Gladsome power will come with his investiture with immortality, and to him in due course, will be opened, that storehouse of knowledge at the doors of which the children of this scientific world are merely clamoring in vain.

"He will then know as he is known. He will know as God knows. He will see nature from its divine side; he will recognize all its phenomena, discern the aim of its operations, measure its forces, estimate their play, and be able to regulate their action as God may permit.

"He will look around in vain for the philosophers who encountered him saying, "What will this babbler say?" And what will be true of Paul will be true of ourselves IF we walk in wisdom's ways. We shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, when the scientific glare of the age in which we live shall have been eclipsed in the glory of Christ."

Think, brothers and sisters, of the forever that will be ours to learn of the marvels of the universe, if we spend our time and effort faithfully now. Think of the understanding of all things that will be opened to us by the Spirit - so far surpassing even the greatest intellect who ever lived-

True wisdom for this dispensation will be found in laying out a course of action that will allow for no wasted time, nothing to impede our steady progress, nothing to obscure the vision of the end of Eternal things in the face of Jesus,

"In whom are hid ALL the treasures of wisdom."

True wisdom will be found in taking hold of the Word, developing a knowledge and intimacy with it that will watch daily at her gates, wait eagerly at the posts of her doors.

"For whoso findeth (wisdom) findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against (wisdom) wrongeth his own soul; all that hate (True Wisdom) love death."

Ye Are Full

At the time the Apostle labored, Corinth was a thriving metropolis of wealth, luxury, commerce and corruption. This is the background of the Corinthian Ecclesia, and it is to some extent reflected in the epistle.

Paul gives indications that the ecclesia there was well-to-do, and in good standing with the world. "Ye are full," he says, contrasting them with himself, "Ye are rich, ye are honorable."

And as is almost inevitable in such circumstances, they gave too much thought to worldly wisdom, to imposing appearance, to polished eloquence, to the meaningless husks of worldly convention. Because of this they did not grow in the Truth, they remained vacant-minded babes when they should have been growing into men. They lost their hold on spiritual values, with sad results to their conduct and course of life.

Envy and contention sprang up; immorality was being tolerated; greediness and revelling disgraced their solemn assemblies; spiritual gifts were prostituted to a confused babble of vain glory and pride; elements of the Truth were in danger, and the Apostle who had begotten them in the faith was openly despised for his poverty, his rude speech and his unpretentious simplicity.

So it was with a heavy heart that Paul took up his pen to address them. "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears," he reveals to them later (2 Cor. 2:4). His thoughts would revert to that happier time when for 18 months he had fervently labored among them, gathering believers and establishing a lightstand in holy zeal and purity.

Now, for fear of mutual sorrow and embarrassment, he hesitates to visit them (2 Cor. 1:23). But still he writes with a nobility and grandeur that befits his position and relation to them. They may have forgotten the height of their calling, but he has not.

His salutation is remarkable. Many grievous rebukes and corrections are to follow, but of these it gives no hint. They are still the Church of God that is at Corinth, called to be saints, separated and sanctified in Christ Jesus, the temple of God, and custodians of the Holy Spirit—so far the lightstand is still there. And so he addresses them, in an effort to appeal to all that is good in them, and to impress them with the need of prompt corrective action.

He goes further. He thanks God for the grace and blessings they have

received and by which they are enriched in all utterance and knowledge. He reminds them that in this respect, no ecclesia has been more highly favored. His inference is clear—"Where much is given, much is required."

And then he looks forward in hope to that time when in the mercy of God he is confident that they will stand approved at the judgment seat of Christ. He does not condone or minimize their errors, but in his love he is sure they will heed his rebuke.

It is noteworthy that, in discussing the things he has heard of them, he frankly names the source of his information. "It hath been declared to me by them of the house of Chloe." No thought of concealment or subterfuge. No anonymous accusations. The mind of the spirit is open and straightforward at all times.

His reference to their being babes in knowledge, though true, would perhaps fall a little unwelcomely upon their ears, for obviously they considered themselves intelligent and wise and mature. It is to this angle that he applies himself in the remainder of the first 2 chapters, stressing a vital principle of divine truth.

His exposition of the relation between the mind of the Spirit and the mind of the flesh is lengthy, but he sums up thus:

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (2:14).

"They are spiritually discerned." They are entirely out of the realm of the natural. The two cannot be reconciled, any more than two people can carry on a conversation who do not know each other's language. They have nothing in common. Between them there is a great gulf fixed.

The world, man in his natural state, all his wisdom, all his knowledge, all his science, all his learning, all his accomplishment —are nothing. That is Paul's basis. There is no arguing the point. There is no debate over the merits and claims of such things as evolution, or any other elaborate theory of man's invention. The whole thing is dismissed with one word—folly.

Why? Because "the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Corinthians 1:21). And this is equally true today.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10).

The wisdom of the world is in many respects profound, but to all practical purposes it is useless, because it knows not God. It does not come to grips with the basic realities of life. The one important fact in the universe—the existence and revelation of God—it either denies or ignores.

260 On every other subject it has assembled vast multitudes of facts and even vaster multitudes of fancies. But to what end? What if one man could gather within his own mind all the world's wisdom, what good would it be to him when the time came to yield his breath? But if he faithfully lays hold of the simple elements of God's wisdom, eternity is His.

"The Jews," Paul says (1 Cor. 1:22), "require a sign; the Greeks seek after wisdom." They lay down their own conditions. They are the authorities. Their questions must be answered. And any revelation, to be considered by them, must conform to their conceptions. "Science"—that magic word!—"Science" says so and so. Nothing that contradicts it dare even be given serious attention.

This is why the teaching of these first two chapters is so important. With one sweep it strips "Science" of all its bluster and pretensions, and reveals it standing in naked shame as the pitiful little "mind of the flesh," blind to all eternal realities.

A discussion of science on its own merits is fatal, because it is endless. There is so much truth and so much error interwoven, so much fact and so much speculation inseparably entwined. But it all belongs to a passing order. "The fashion of this world passeth away" (1. Cor. 7:31). Where the mind of man and the mind of God conflict, we do not argue, we simply choose.

Saving truth, the knowledge that brings life, is in a different category altogether. Worldly knowledge is of no assistance in acquiring this, but rather the reverse. This is spiritually discerned—it is learned through the medium of a meek and humble and Godly lowliness of mind, and no other way.

The more a mind is cluttered and obsessed with self-gratifying worldly wisdom, the harder is its task of complying with the divine requirements.

"If any man seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (3:18).

God makes deliberate choice, Paul says, of those that are foolish and base and weak and despised, wherewith to accomplish His purpose, that no flesh should glory in His presence. We can understand why. All flesh is insignificant before His glorious and perfect majesty. "In my flesh," Paul says (Rom. 7:18), "dwelleth no good thing." Therefore pride is ignorance and self-approval is presumption.

To illustrate his reasoning, Paul cites his own conduct while among them. Now Paul was as well qualified as any to display worldly knowledge. But, he says, I determined—I made a special point—Not to do so. He deliberately divested himself of any personal persuasiveness and

appeal.

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As is recorded of Christ (Phil. 2:7—original), he emptied himself—he made himself of no reputation—that he might be a suitable and faithful vessel for the use of God. He did not look upon worldly wisdom with benevolent tolerance. He did not regard it in any way as of value in the work of God. He knew that it was incompatible with this, and that to use it would confuse an issue that must be kept clear.

Men must be persuaded to forsake reliance on the natural workings of their own minds and the accumulated "wisdom" of their fellowmen, and seek humbly for God's wisdom through the operation of the Spirit. There is no other way to God's favor than humiliation and meek reliance. All this is contrary to the mind of the flesh, and the world's standards.

In the eyes of most people, Paul destroyed his effectiveness by this course. To the natural man, he had no appeal. He displayed none of the qualities that attract the worldly mind. But Paul's mission was not to persuade the world, but to take out from them a people for the Lord.

He did not want to appeal to the majority, because he knew they were not the material God wanted. He was seeking those, and those only, that had a sympathetic affinity with the mind of the Spirit. Any who might be attracted from any other motive only cumbered the ecclesia, and were sure to prove later a source of trouble and anxiety.

"Wisdom is the principal thing," declares Solomon (Proverbs 4:7)

"Get wisdom Cry after knowledge, lift up thy voice for understanding, seek her as silver, search for her as for hid treasures" (Proverbs 2:3-4).

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

If we do not learn to make this yearning for knowledge and wisdom and righteousness our main concern in life, then we can confidently assure ourselves that we, at least, are not numbered among that very, very few elect—that we are but worldlings, out-side the scope of the Spirit's transforming power. Let us be among the wise!

The Lord gives wisdom, we are told, only to those that love Him. Only to those whose love is true and strong enough to control their conduct. If we love Him, He says, we shall do the things that please Him. That is the test. And there is no other force on earth that can overcome the terrible and relentless power of the flesh—only a fervent love.

Only a burning, personal love for God and His warm, irradiating goodness, engaging the whole heart, mind and strength, is strong enough

to 262 prevent us following the selfish, fatal course that ends in death. Love gives energy and enthusiasm and vitality. It makes the meanest task pleasant. Nothing is too much trouble for it. No labor too great. No vigil too long. Without it the path of duty is insufferable drudgery. Love gives life a purpose and an incentive, a radiant glow that nothing can dim.

This is the fire that Paul is trying desperately to rekindle in the hearts of those at Corinth. They had all the machinery, but the driving force was lacking. They weren't progressing—they were drifting downstream and bickering among themselves.

In his enthusiasm he is eager to discuss with them the deeper mysteries and glories of the Kingdom, but there is no intelligent response—only a vacant stare. They are carnally-minded, they are babes, they cannot comprehend, and he does not excuse them.

They have consumed their precious time with foolish dissention:

"There is among you envying and strife and contention" (3:3).

Envy was at the bottom of it, as it often is. The Scriptures have much to say about envy. It is the inevitable weed that grows in ground barren of love. It feeds on self-pity. It is the most despicable and malicious of all the corruptions of the human mind:

"Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous: but who is able to stand before envy" (Proverbs 27:4). Elsewhere (Proverbs 14) it is called cancerous rottenness of the bones.

Envy displays itself in many ways. It is the reaction of the wicked to the righteous, seizing upon small points of mean criticism. It was for envy, we are told, that the Jews hated the perfect man and delivered him to be crucified.

Are we so free from these things that we need not be concerned about them? James asks (4:5)

"Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"

This warning is meant for all. It is a warning against the natural reactions of the natural mind, which seem so good and right to the mind that conceives them. That mind, of course, does not recognize or admit these things as envy. But we are clearly warned that unless we humbly seek to be taught of God, we have no hope of even knowing what is right, much less performing it.

"Love," says Paul, "envieth not." Either we choose this course, or we don't. There is no use trying to reason with the mind of the flesh—it will

justify everything, and confuse the issue where it cannot justify. It 263 must be abandoned.

All that the world regards as fine—brilliant worldly intellect, strong passion, fierce animal courage, self-esteem, animal beauty, ambition, assertiveness, and envy in its many deceptive forms—all these must be seen in their true and ugly light, and resolutely repudiated. Christ, we are told, emptied himself. These were the natural desires and tendencies which he overcame and rooted out. Paul describes them as filthiness—natural filthiness of flesh & mind.

All this demands self-abasement, a bitter recognition of the uncleanness and corruptness of our animal natures and thoughts, a clear conception of the deceptiveness of the flesh.

To counteract the envy and strife with which they are destroying themselves, Paul urges them to a consideration of the holiness of their calling, of its gravity and solemnity:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (3:16).

"None of us," he reminds the Roman brethren (Rom. 14:7), "liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself." We have assumed obligations; we have made promises; we have entered a covenant. We walk on holy ground; we do well to remember it.

"Ye are the temple of God"—you have entered God's dwelling—take heed how you conduct yourself. Remember the sharp lesson of Uzzah; remember the careless sons of Aaron. It is little enough we can do—let us do that little earnestly and well.

"If any man defile the temple of God, HIM SHALL GOD DESTROY; for the temple of God is holy."

Is any lesson more strongly or repeatedly taught throughout Scripture? Is any more necessary to weak creatures of dust?

"I have laid the foundation," Paul says (3:10), "let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon." Then in direct connection with this warning of defiling God's temple, Paul returns to the theme of worldly wisdom:

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."

The wisdom of the world is obnoxious to God—it has no place in His temple. Above all do not glory in men and their wisdom and accomplishments. Take a broader view. If you are worthy, all things are yours, and these men are but a means to that end, supplied and equipped

by 264 God for your benefit. Give God the glory, if any is due.

"All things are yours," he says—"the world, life, death, things present, things to come—all are yours!" How incongruous to fret and scheme for the temporary possession of an insignificant fraction of our inheritance when in due time, if we are worthy, all will be given us freely! The earth is ours eternally—surely we can withdraw from the mad worldly scramble for a few years and conduct ourselves in patience and faith and obedience!

"All things are yours!" Everything is subservient to your interests. All things are working together for your good. The present international tensions and conflicts, the life-and-death struggles of mighty nations are just pre-arranged details of God's plan of the ages centering around His elect. If we could only get this conception permanently ingrained into our outlook, we should never be tempted or dismayed by any events. All is as sure and planned and necessary as the expert movements of the surgeon's knife.

As Paul turns from this grand conception, it is easy to understand his next words, "With me it is a very small thing that should be judged of you." The issues were too big to permit anxiety over man's judgment. He knew that the time was coming for judgment. He knew that man's opinion mattered nothing.

He fervently hoped and prayed that they would rise to justify their early promising beginning when all was love and zeal, but if they did not, he had done his best. There were millions who would not heed the call. His principle concern was with those few who would. His foremost duty was to the true church of God. Christ has said that not one of such would be finally lost. Paul besought the Corinthians with tears that they should not receive the grace of God in vain, but he knew that many would.

And so he early decided to "know no man after the flesh." He knew some would come and go like ships in the night. Many brethren, too, he knew were walking as enemies of the cross of Christ. Toward the end of his ministry, he had written from prison with an aching heart that "All they which in Asia be turned away from me" (2 Timothy 1:15). Demas, his fellow laborer, his trusted companion, at the same time unbelievably chose the attractions of this present evil world to the glories of the Kingdom (2 Timothy 4:10).

But still he could say, "None of these things move me." The purpose of God stood sure. Paul's duty lay clearly before him. In the end all the elect would be gathered: not one would be missing. All the rest would be swept away with the things they had loved best. "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of man's judgment."

"Do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). 265

"So we speak, not as pleasing men, but God. Neither at any time used we flattering words, nor of men sought we glory."

Men are such insignificant things—GOD is the one to please and consider. Yet he says in this epistle we are considering:

"I please all men in all things" (10:33). And to the Romans (15:2):

"Let every one please his neighbor for his good to edification."

Is there contradiction? We know there is not, though many things recorded by the mind of the Spirit seem contradictory to the mind of the flesh. Paul was "all things to all men" (1 Corinthians 9:22). He pleased all whenever possible. In nothing would he cause offence if self-denial and self-abasement on his part could prevent it. In this sense he "pleased all men." But he sought no man's favor; he sacrificed no principles. Desertion did not move him; ingratitude did not embitter him; contempt did not trouble him. For he was confident, he said, that

"The Lord, when he comes, will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have his due praise of God" (4:5).

Until that time he was content to wait:

"He that is spiritual discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man" (2:15).

Then, chiding them for glorying, he says,

"Who maketh thee to differ from another? What hast thou that thou didst not receive? If thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory?" (4:7).

How much easier and more natural it is to take pride in our privileges and abilities than to faithfully realize and discharge the obligations they impose upon us! Paul reverses the world's judgment. Ability is not an asset—it is a liability. It has been given us. It is charged to our account, and it must be accounted for. Favor is never divorced from justice. If we seem highly favored, correspondingly more is required of us. God has no idle favorites.

"Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself"

The natural man is so incredibly warped in his outlook. In the sight of God such a man is a common thief, abusing a sacred trust and using his Lord's goods to his own ends. The mind of the flesh is a treacherous guide.

There is little said about the personal circumstances of the Apostles in the New Testament records, but Paul here, because of the Corinthians' 266 attitude, is moved to mention his own position briefly.

The Corinthians, we have observed, were apparently well-to-do. Vs. 8 & 10 of this 4th chapter support this observation. This led unconsciously to a false and superficial viewpoint regarding Paul. Of himself he says,

"We both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; we are reviled, persecuted, defamed, made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things" (4:11-15).

For Christ, he told the Philippians, he had suffered the loss of all things, even to the barest amenities of life, and the ordinary respect of his fellowman. In poverty, despised, and unattractive in appearance, he was everywhere the object of amused contempt; a common vagabond; the filth and offscouring of the world; a spectacle to angels and to men.

How many today, punctilious about the washing of cups and the dictates of fashion, would recognize the messenger of life and hope in such a disguise? Little wonder the prosperous and worldly-wise Corinthians had outgrown his crude and embarrassing plainness.

God's ways truly are not man's. God chooses those things that are weak and base and despised.

"I write not these things to shame you," Paul assures them, "but as my beloved sons I warn you,—I warn you to judge carefully." and wisely according to spirit and truth. Give less thought to outward appearance and material possession. What consideration would the blind and empty-minded world give to this homeless and ill-clad outcast?

Our minds irresistibly turn to another such solitary figure, dwelling alone in the wilderness, in the humblest of circumstances. "But what went ye out into the wilderness to see?" Christ asked the perplexed multitude (Matthew 11:8). "Did you expect to find man clothed in soft raiment—some imposing fashionplate?" Did John's rough appearance dismay you?

And someone else was recognized throughout all Israel for similar disregard of worldly standards—even John's own prototype—"A hairy man and girt with a girdle of leather." (2 Kings 1:8)

And there is yet another homeless wayfarer, another unknown lonely wanderer; rejected, unesteemed; no form or comeliness, not beauty that we should desire him; no attractive or imposing appearance; no visible dignity or grandeur—lowly, humble, reviled and despised—yet the Son of God and the light of the world, the way of life and the door of hope.

Him we meet to remember, though the world by wisdom knew him not.

Judge not according to outward appearance, but judge with wisdom and discernment.

"He that is spiritual discerneth all things."

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Bro. G. V. Growcott

Was Sir Isaac Newton a Christadelphian?

Simply stated, no one enjoys the study of Isaac Newton's religious writings as much as I do. I find his writing fascinating, and even when I disagree with him, which is frequently, I'm still usually impressed with how he reached his conclusions. He did an amazing work in a very difficult time.

Isaac Newton should be credited with understanding many aspects of Bible Truth in his very dark age. That the greatest scientific mind of the recent past took the time to examine and understand divine matters at all, is a refreshing contrast to the scientific community we have today. And it is reassuring on some level that this wonderfully intelligent and celebrated example of human nature reached so many of the same conclusions that we have reached on divine matters, in a period of such a vacuum of divine wisdom.

I think many people share with me a similar interest and sentiment for Sir Isaac, and I understand that. But some folks are simply going over the edge to try to claim a very notable and respectable man to be a Christadelphian. He was not a Christadelphian, as we should understand the term. Maybe, sadly, as the term is being redefined in the closing years of the 20th Century and now into the 21st Century, he is; and maybe the term is becoming inadequate to describe those brethren set apart from the world of Christianity as a whole. But from what we think we know of Isaac Newton, (and I stress "think," because it is so difficult to judge the beliefs of a man from 250 years away) it appears that there were serious differences in the religious belief and practices of Sir Isaac, and the true Christadelphians.

The most serious difference, if his biographers have caught the matter correctly, is his belief in the pre-existence of Jesus, albeit to his credit, not in the Trinitarian sense. At least one of his writings indicate that even after he rejected the Trinity, and fairly late in his life, after he had gone to work for the Mint (1696) in his 50s, he still believed in the eternal sonship of Christ. There are snippets of notes in his later studies which cast doubt that he maintained this belief his whole life, but his beliefs on this matter have not yet been found to be renounced. Since he appears to have had knowledge of, and even some association with the Socinians, (one group of antitrinitarians from that era who clearly did deny the preexistence of

Christ,) one might have expected his clarifications to have been more forth coming if he changed his mind in later years. Perhaps more study of his notes will give us a different picture. But concerning the current opinion, 268 one of his biographers wrote:

Isaac Newton, heretic: the strategies of a Nicodemite by Stephen D. Snobelen, pg. 387. "The doctrinal parallels also extend beyond Trinitological issues. Both Newton and the Socinians were mortalists who saw the teaching of the immortal soul as an unwarranted corruption of primitive Christianity. Related to his mortalism, but without an explicit Socinian parallel, Newton came to deny (largely on exegetical grounds) the reality of a personal devil and literal demons, the latter of which he equated with departed spirits, whose existence was a doctrinal impossibility for someone who denied that the soul could exist without the body. The denial of the eternity of hell's torments was also part of the Socinian system, and rumoured to be part of Newton's as well. Moreover, Newton and the Socinians accepted believers' baptism, holding that baptism can take place only after faith and a process of catechizing. (Furthermore, Newton and the Socinians were committed irenicists [those desirous of peace] and advocates of religious toleration.) Finally, the Socinians were ardent supporters of the separation of Church and state, and Newton appears to have moved in this direction as well. This is not to say that Newton was a Socinian. Newton, like the Arians, believed in the pre-existence of Christ. Socinians did not. Nevertheless, when Newton is not dealing directly with Christ's pre-existence, his characterizations of God and Christ are virtually indistinguishable from those of Socinianism. Nor did Newton believe that the Socinians, that is, those who denied Christ's pre-existence were heretics. This expanded hermeneutical profile of Newton's Christology, therefore, suggests a mix of Arian and Socinian elements."-- (My underlining.)

In just what form Sir Isaac believed in the pre-existence of Christ, it is difficult to say. But there are things we know for sure Isaac Newton did believe which we, as Christadelphians, wouldn't tolerate; principles which were stated and defended by Sir Isaac up until his death. The most significant being he fellowshipped regularly with Anglicans, and condemned as schismatics those who wouldn't. The following is by the same biographer:

Ibid. pg. 389. "Newton's irenicism provided another support. Like the Erasmian distinction between fundamenta and adiaphora, but based more immediately on Hebrews 5, Newton believed that only the 'milk' of simple truth was required for baptism and communion, and that only the mature could attain to the 'strong meats' of the deeper things in theology: & 'strong meats', wrote Newton, 'are not fit for babes'. These 'strong meats'

for elders included such matters as disputes over Trinitarian dogma. (Newton believed that 'if the strong impose their opinions as conditions of communion they preach another gospel & become schismatics'.) So Newton did not disturb the Church with his 'strong meats', revealing 269 them only to a select group of 'strong men'. Moreover, Newton also stated that 'if any man contend for any other sort of worship which he cannot prove to have been practised in the Apostles days, he may use it in his Closet without troubling the Churches with his private sentiments'. Newton knew many of his beliefs were contentious and in dispute, so it seems likely that his irenic stance also helped confine his theology to the private sphere." —(My underlining.)

Now it is true, that responsibilities concerning fellowship appear to be the last of the great truths grasped in the life of an individual. It was clearly the last great truth grasped by both Bro. John Thomas as he uncovered the truth in our age, and Bro. Roberts as he established the ecclesias. But there is really no indication that Isaac Newton ever changed his thoughts on this, apart from maybe his refusing of Church Sacraments at his death. His great falling out with William Whiston was over this issue.

From what we can tell, Isaac Newton himself would very much resent his name being associated with Christadelphians, or any other group which separated itself from the state religion. And, given the rumors about his temper, probably the best way to call Isaac Newton a Christadelphian is from a distant 250 years after his death.

Another unchristadelphian like thing that Isaac Newton did, was to quietly sit on a committee that retained the death penalty for antitrinitarians (though he himself was one.) As the biographer wrote:

Ibid pg. 398 "But most stunning of all was Newton's appointment on 15 May 1689 to a parliamentary committee for considering the 'Bill for Liberty and Indulgence to Protestant Dissenters'. This was none other than the 1689 Toleration Act. The committee members, all of whom were to have a voice in the deliberations, were to meet on 16 May 1689. When they reported back to Parliament the next day, they included among their recommended additions the requirement that dissenters 'profess Faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ his Eternal Son, the true God, and in the Holy Spirit, One God blessed for evermore'. What could Newton, by this time a fierce antitrinitarian, do in these pressing circumstances? He dare not raise suspicion by speaking out against the amendment. Perhaps he maintained a cautious silence. Did his implication in the 1689 Act, directed as it was in part against non-trinitarian dissenters like himself, weigh heavy on him and possibly even contribute to the psychological stresses that eventually led to his 1693 breakdown? Or did he justify his

involvement by convincing himself of the Hobbesian distinction between publicly legislated doctrine and the faith one could practice quietly in private? It is also possible that he saw the Bill as a positive advance for 270 dissent and a herald of even greater liberties to come. We will never know. On the other hand, involvement (intentional or otherwise) in an Act that extended no tolerance to heresy would serve as the ultimate cover for a secret heretic."

Going on with behavior unacceptable for Christadelphians in any age, he also held the governmental position of director of the Mint, which required him to enforce national law regarding counterfeiting, and in that role he even sent men to death by hanging. He also stood for Parliament twice. He had two failed attempts at the same. His own words are a testament to his struggles with his life, and his responsibilities to God. He lists one of his sins as:- "... setting my heart on money, learning, and pleasure more than Thee ...".

Isaac Newton understood that the truth leads to responsibility, and obedience. Still, Sir Isaac, from what we can tell, rejected his responsibility and lived in disobedience to the divine commands concerning fellowship. He was absolutely unwilling to "come out from among them and be ye separate." Instead he coveted their affections, and lived as a bright light among them. He is rather the antithesis to Moses of whom it is written:

Hebrews 11:24-26 "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

Clearly, Isaac Newton was not prepared to suffer affliction with the people of God, but chose rather to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He hobnobbed with the mighty and powerful in his life, and lived in splendour and affluence while the "Witness" struggled to merely survive, ostracized as heretics and persecuted by Catholic and Protestant alike (including Newton's Anglican friends) everywhere across the European continent.

I suppose we can say it is a small wonder that some Central brethren now wish to claim him, themselves never having grasped the divine teaching concerning obedience and fellowship. Like Sir Isaac, they too seem to desire the respectability and wealth and prestige of this age. Or perhaps they feel, like Newton may have, that their work among those corrupting the truth is a great sacrificial work. Stay in and fight--sort of--

after the example of Isaac Newton. They reject Samuel's counsel to Saul when he contrasted obedience and the doing of a great work: 271

1 Samuel 15:22 "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

God can do anything infinitely better than we. If God desires a certain end, He will perform it. He doesn't require us to violate His commands in the process of our lives. To think to do so, is to justify Uzza who braced the Ark against a fall, or Saul in his desire to make a great sacrifice, or even Peter who thought to defend Jesus from Israel's leaders. Obedience is the test of true love. Obedience is what God requires. Obedience is the great lesson of the Scriptures. This lesson is unlearned among many of our faithful friends still in Central, as it was by Sir Isaac Newton.

Isaac Newton lived in a period of time when the true witness was to be dead for 3 ½ days or from 1685 to 1790. (Rev. 11:7-11.) This meant that the witness would be retrained, legally and politically, from preaching in any open manner. Sir Isaac found himself thus restrained as would anyone who made up a part of that dead witness, but he made compromises in exchange for wealth and fame that other antitrinitarians did not do, and which we should find intolerable in our own lives. May God be merciful to him.

Knowing my infatuation with Isaac Newton, a friend directed me to a website: [Sir Isaac Newton: Our Brother in Christ?](#) where the question was addressed as to whether or not he was a "Christadelphian." Now it is true that this website comes from the Central missionary program, which in my personal opinion is the most corrupting of societies in Central. So it really is small wonder to read these sorts of things among this group of men. Did not Jesus speak this of "missionaries" of his day?

Matthew 23:15 "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

Still, one wonders why, even to the missionaries, the benefit of association with one of the world's greatest minds is really worth the disadvantage of being associated with one believing in the pre-existence of Christ, and who argued vehemently against leaving the state church. Or do they know that overwhelmingly, their "converts" to Christadelphia will never expand their minds beyond the superficial which would make this a concern.

In any case, as the writings of Isaac Newton become better known, I consider it worthwhile to compare the writings on this website with reality. First, the author, Allen Eyre, claims that Isaac Newton rarely attended Chapel. This was a claim made against Newton by his enemies. His 272 biographers write to the contrary:

Ibid pg 398 "Frequent the service of the Church of England Newton certainly did. In Cambridge Newton faithfully attended Sunday service at Great St. Mary's Church, although his weekday attendance at chapel was dilatory enough for his chamber-fellow Humphrey Newton to comment 'yet He scarcely knew ye House of Prayer'. If any truth can be gleaned from Stukeley's agenda-driven testimony, there was no such backsliding in his London period. Stukeley noted that the great man 'could not excuse himself from the weekly solemn adoration of the Supreme Being, both out of principle and a regard to his influence and example; and he was sensible that many persons were attentive to his conduct in that respect'. Such a policy would be consistent with his desire to appear God-fearing; Newton hated people thinking he was an infidel. A surviving Sacramental Certificate from the Middlesex County Records provides legal proof of Newton's attendance at communion in the parish church of St. James's on 5 July 1702. Finally, both his duodecimo bible 'with service Duty', along with the well-worn prayer book in his octavo bible, provide compelling physical testimony to habitual worship in the idolatrous Church."

So clearly Newton worshiped in public regularly and he did so with the Anglicans. And as we pointed out before, he was critical of those antitrinitarians who would not--some of whom no doubt, were true Christadelphians.

Allen Eyre went on to write:

"His interpretations of prophecy and chronology, written in the 17th century, proved to be more accurate than those of John Thomas written in the 19th century. For example, he predicted that there would be a major return to Palestine in 1899, the date when the Jewish Colonial Trust was established to facilitate just such a return, and that 1948 would see "the redemption of Israel."

That is just one of those things you read, and then you think to yourself, "He didn't really write that, did he?" What motivated him to compare Isaac Newton in a favourable manner to Bro. John Thomas in the middle of this article? And presuming there is some legitimate explanation for this that right now escapes us, how does one justify such a comparison, or such a conclusion?

Prophecy and chronology are two separate subjects. Bro. John Thomas published extensively and in great detail on prophecy and one major effort at Chronology. Isaac Newton intended to publish very little, and virtually nothing in his own lifetime. Generally, the writings we have of him are from personal notes, and they are often contradictory, as we might find in our own personal notes if publicly exposed. His two works, "Observations of Daniel and St. John" was printed posthumously and appears to 273 never have been intended for printing. His work "The Chronology of the Ancient Kingdoms, Amended" was also printed posthumously, but was probably being prepared for printing.

Newton's "Chronology" is not particularly notable today, though it was a great accomplishment in his own time. The greatest accomplishment in his work is shortening the dates for the ages of the Greek and Assyrian civilizations. He did this through two different good ideas, neither of which have any relevance to Biblical Chronology.

First, he made the observation that kings do not live as long as the average population. The estimate of 40 years per generation was accurate for the general population, but the same rule applied to royalty resulted in too long a time for the reign of kings. If a society estimated its age based upon the total number of kings it had reigning an average of 40 years, it would result in too long an age for a civilization. He demonstrated, using the lines of kings in England and France, that the average reign of a king is only 20 years.

Secondly, he made the argument that astronomical events are always consistent, and therefore the historical recording of astronomical events, such as eclipses and the sighting of comets etc. give us very firm dates. This was poorly understood in some quarters and simply denied in others, who justified too long a time period for some of the ancient civilizations. Isaac Newton's laws regarding planets and their motion allowed him to come up with supposed accurate dates in history.

(Personally, I'm not convinced this is at all the case. There are two extraordinary astronomical events recorded in the Scriptures which conceivably could have resulted in a divine adjustment in the motion of the planets, which would make the dating system proposed by Isaac Newton impossible.

Joshua 10:12-13 "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written

in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."

Isaiah 38:7-8 "And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it 274 was gone down."

If God accomplished either of these events by the manipulation of the sun or earth, then dates based upon the unchangeableness of the planetary motion will inevitably be wrong. I suggest there is no way to know, one way or the other.)

But when we examine Isaac Newton's treatment of the details of the prophecies themselves, we find he comes up with very little in the way of consistence prophetic exegesis. Let us consider the prophecy of Daniel's 70 weeks, and we will see that it exhibits many of the difficulties that Isaac Newton experienced with his theories.

Isaac Newton would have agreed that the prophesy of 70 weeks entailed a period of 490 years. But to Sir Isaac, these were not 490 continuous years. He breaks the prophesy into at least 4 different and distinct periods. He believes the expression:

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:" actually refers to two separate periods. The first was a period of 62 weeks or 434 years which he dated, not from the "commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem," but from the completion of the wall by Nehemiah in the 28th of Artaxerxes, 4278 JP [Julian Calendar], (435 BC). He then argues that there are 434 years or 62 weeks from the completion of the wall, to the birth of Christ in 4712 JP (1 BC.)

The first seven weeks mentioned in this prophesy, are suggested by Isaac Newton to not apply to this period at all, but rather to a period of time in the future from the command to rebuild Jerusalem in these latter days till the return of Christ. He believed there would be 49 years from the latter day command to rebuild Jerusalem to the return of Christ. (At one point in his life, he speculated that the 49 year period would begin in 1895 AD.)

The last week of seven years of the total 70 weeks of 490 years, are mentioned in the next verse:

Daniel 9:27 "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

This last week, according to Isaac Newton, was also a period separate, from the other periods. He believed this period started with the crucifixion of Christ, and ended 7 years later with Cornelius' conversion. 275

The term "midst of the week" Isaac Newton interprets, as half a week, and he argues that this half week is not part of the three divisions of the 70 weeks at all, but rather a three year period from 67 AD to 70 AD when Jerusalem was surrounded and eventually sacked by Rome.

So to summarize his interpretation of Daniel's prophesy of 70 weeks, the seven weeks are 49 years from 1895 AD through 1944 AD. The sixty two weeks was a 434 year period from 435 BC to 1 BC. The final 7 years was from 34 AD to 41 AD. And the midst of the week, was a period from 67 AD to 70 AD.

All of this can be found in his work "Observations" in chapter 10. Again, to be fair to Newton, "Observations" was published 6 years after his death, and there is no evidence that Newton ever intended it to go public. It is possible that it was just an idea he played with, rather than a serious sketch of prophetic interpretation.

Now, if this is regarded as a better and more accurate prophetic interpretation than that of Bro. Thomas who observed the scriptural testimony, simply beginning the 70 weeks with the command to rebuild Jerusalem in the 20th of Artaxerxes, and ending 490 years later with the crucifixion of Christ; then we simply have to let ignorance have its way, and not waste any more time with them on the subject.

Now I agree that this period of 70 weeks is a very tough period in which to satisfy oneself. The dates themselves as established by modern Chronologists (to whom Isaac Newton contributed greatly) appear very accurate. But the prophetic language also appears quite clear. From the going forth of the command, to the cutting off of Messiah the Prince, is 490 years. This command went forth in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which would be 444 BC. Isaac Newton and Bro. Thomas both believed that Christ was crucified in 34 AD. But this requires the 20th of Artaxerxes to be 457 BC. To resolve this difficulty, they made different choices. Bro. Thomas chose, "let God be true, but every man a liar" and adopted 457 BC as the 20th of Artaxerxes in spite of human calculations to the contrary. Isaac Newton chose to believe that his human calculations are correct, and

therefore he was faced with the fact that the 70 weeks cannot run concurrent. I suggest there is a third way which maintains the integrity of the Scriptures as demanded by Bro. Thomas, and agrees with modern Chronology, the foundation of which was laid by Sir. Isaac. Those interested can find it at www.berean.info .

Well, what about the claim that Isaac Newton predicted the Zionist convention of 1899, and statehood for Israel in 1948? These claims are simply not accurate. The dates that Allen Eyre is celebrating for Isaac 276 Newton are improperly stated by Allen Eyre. Isaac Newton did not choose 1899 as the date of the call to regather Israel, but rather the date when the regathering would be complete. But more importantly, he choose "609 or sometime later," as the starting point of Daniel's 1290 years, which must be agreed to be simply a bad/unjustifiable date.

As we showed above in the discussion of the 70 Weeks, Isaac Newton applied the first 7 weeks of Daniel's 70 weeks, as a 49 year period prior to Christ return which (when using the 1945 date) he felt was at the end of Daniel's 1335. Therefore, he believed that the call to regather Israel would begin four years before the completion of the 1290, or 49 years before the end of the 1335. And as such, the call to regather Israel would have been 1895, not 1899. His projected prophetic scheme (if it be fair to Newton to call it that) called for the regathering to be completed by the end of the 1290 (1899 AD, which obviously it was not "when God shall have accomplished to scatter the power of his holy people") and for the return of Christ at the end of the 1335 (1944 AD, not 1948 which obviously also did not occur.) "The Redemption of Israel" as Allen Eyre quotes, was not the formation of the nation of Israel in 1948, but the "blessed state" (Daniel 12:12) of Christ's return as suggested by Isaac Newton to occur in 1944. To summarize Isaac Newton's speculations, another nation (not Israel) should have called for the regathering of the Jews to Palestine in 1895. The scattering should have been complete by 1899. And Christ should have returned in 1944.

But all this is rather immaterial anyway, because Isaac Newton had gone away from all this by the time of his death, moving the starting date for Daniel's times, time, and a half time (1260 years) to the rule of Charlemagne in 800 AD. Thus in his later years, he chose 2060 AD for the date of Christ's return.

Then, when he came to examine the 2300 years of Daniel 8:14, he decided that the 2300 years of Daniel for the purifying of the sanctuary had to be pushed still further into the future, choosing four other possible dates from 2376-2430 AD.

In reading his work, Isaac Newton appears waffling on future prophetic events, but probably more fairly to him, he appears a mildly interested dabbler in the future prophetic details, and expressed dates only to calm down the folks who believed that Christ's return was "at the door" in the early eighteenth century. He knew that the return of Christ was beyond his lifetime, and even expressed that when knowledge was increased, as prophesied by Daniel, people would see these things more clearly.

I get the impression that he himself would be incredulous that anyone was looking seriously at these things which he himself gave only passing interest to. His choosing of dates, especially starting dates vacillates 277 greatly, and it appears very questionable that he ever settled any of it in his mind, or even wanted to. "Let time be the Interpreter" was among his favourite lines for dealing with future events. His techniques also appear undisciplined, but there is no reason that it should be otherwise. These are not well thought out and organized papers for public dissemination, but his own personal notes collected from his library after his death and examined when he has no opportunity to explain or defend himself.

Isaac Newton was very interested in establishing the general theme of prophesy, and recording how it had been fulfilled to his point in history. But, recognizing the return of Christ to be very distant from his lifetime, he was all but disinterested in projecting how future events would play out.

And to try and go back and say one portion of his rambling notes is to be understood as his valid teaching, when interpreted in such a manner which Newton himself did not do; and then to compare that with a consistent and harmonious and Scripturally driven plan such as exhibited by Bro. John Thomas is, well, bizarre!

Bro. Jim

Phillips

As Ye See the Day Approaching

It is recorded in Acts 14:22 that: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Called unto holiness, each one must separate himself or herself from the uncleanness that is in the world through lust. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (I John 2:16) Further, it is written that: "...The friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4) All flesh has corrupted Yahweh's way upon the earth. We know that the whole world lies in wickedness. This is why we must come out and be separate.

The separateness will bring about misunderstanding and dislike by those in and of the world. We can expect that misunderstanding and dislike. In fact, we can expect persecution and rejection by those who walk in the darkness. Our master said: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because 278 they know not him that sent me." (John 15:18-21)

Think of the awesome privilege of being friends of Christ; of being called his Brethren! We must keep in memory what he said regarding this friendship and brotherhood. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (John 15:14-15) "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matthew 12:50)

The misunderstanding and dislike, persecution and rejection will come, because we are striving to lead a godly lifestyle that is completely different and foreign to the way they of the world live. Peter wrote in his first epistle of how those in the world would view us. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." (1 Peter 4:1-5)

Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount address, showed us how we should view and act upon the hatred, persecution and rejection of those in the surrounding darkness. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12)

Those in the world around us are: "...aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12) In light of these facts, we need to be ever watchful that we do not become puffed up with pride, arrogance and conceit. Our attitude toward those in the surrounding darkness should be: There, but for the grace of God, is me. The Scriptures warn us: "...Thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear..." (Romans 11:20)

We must ever be ready to share with them the glorious Gospel, which is the power of God for salvation to all believing. Our constant practice should be to study to show ourselves approved unto God and able to rightly divide His Holy Word of Truth; being ready always to give a 279 reason for the hope that is in us. We should do all in our power to allow that glorious Gospel light to shine into the surrounding darkness; that those in the darkness may see and be drawn unto it. Our desire should be to do good to all men, as we have opportunity; showing abroad the love of God, as has been shown to us.

We need to constantly remind ourselves that we are in the world, but not of it. We must avoid assimilation. The course of wisdom is to be about the work before us of becoming like our living head. If our eyes are ever upon the goal of attaining a place in that glorious kingdom soon to be set up upon this earth; we will not want anything cleaving to us that would, in the day of inspection, appear to be unseemly or out of place. Of Noah it is written: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Hebrews 11:7)

Anything superfluous, anything incongruous must be put away. The world may taunt and laugh, but we must be as Noah was, ever working toward the goal and doing (to the best of our ability) what is commanded. It is noted that Noah was moved with fear. We also should be moved with fear, knowing that Yahweh has appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that Man whom He has ordained, even the Lord Jesus Christ. And knowing that judgment first must begin at the household of God, we should be seeking to be as prepared as possible, hastening after righteousness. Noah condemned the world by his actions. We should be doing the same.

Are we becoming lukewarm and tiring of the struggle? Are we letting down our guard? Are we losing our ability to perceive the constant danger from without, as well as from within? What we allow into our minds and

into our lives is affecting us either positively or negatively. Life and death are literally before us at every moment, as we walk the confined pathway leading to life. We are constantly being bombarded from so many sources around us. We need to maintain our balance - our equilibrium in a spiritual sense.

So much of what is in movies, on the Internet, television and the radio and in books, magazines and newspapers is utterly useless and unprofitable for us. It is deadly dangerous! We must make choices and Holy Scripture is our guide as to what is good for us. Wisdom is profitable to direct. We must not only avoid these things, but speak out vehemently against them. We must make (and keep) the tree and its fruit good. If we don't bear good and wholesome fruit – the fruit of the Spirit – we just simply won't be able to stand in the Day of Judgment. These things bring to mind the first Psalm which instructs us in the right way.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

Let us avoid this downward progression of the broad way leading to death. Walking, standing and finally sitting, mentioned in that first Psalm, show us just how easily and almost imperceptibly we can go astray down that terrible pathway. This constant struggle or warfare is the real battleground of the called of God in Christ Jesus. Most of us nowadays aren't suffering physical persecution for the Word of God, but we will experience the world's hatred and rejection for our views of right and wrong. They will separate us from their company for our religious beliefs. They will regard us as “self-righteous” and “holier-than-thou”. Many of a religious persuasion in the world will perceive us as cultists and weird or strange. This is as it should be.

Remember Jesus' words in Matthew 5. If we prevail in this warfare, we will attain unto the life and joy of the age of the ages and of the beyond. Think of the beauty of holiness and perfect, unbroken fellowship we will have with the Father and the son through all eternity! These struggles and self-denials and trials are but a light affliction which endures

but for a moment! We, if faithful, will be the true winners and conquerors. Let us ever remember that we cannot prevail alone. We need the constant help, strength and guidance of our Heavenly Father, of His son (our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ), and of each other. May it be said of us in that day that we have overcome.

Let us fight on, then! “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35-39)

Bro. David VanPelt

Thoughts:

Spiritual Transformation

Spiritual transformation MUST be the biggest, most pressing matter in the forefront of our attention all our lives, if we hope for life.

Eternal life is well within the reach of any who are WILLING TO PUT FORTH THE REQUIRED LIFELONG EFFORT—to make it their foremost and constant concern. Anything less is belittling God and His great promise of love.

God earnestly SEEKS men that He may save them. Victory is promised, yea, it is guaranteed "to him that overcometh."

Overcometh WHAT? Clearly it is himself, his own flesh, his own lusts, his own natural thoughts and emotions and desires and reactions.

We have got to completely change our basic nature from conflict and antagonisms to love and gentleness.

This transformation of character is the "overcoming" that is required by God. It is a constant struggle. In many ways the problem becomes more deceptive as we advance in accomplishment in the Truth.

Knowledge puffeth up. Achievement creates self confidence (when in reality all good is of God). We can never relax, assuming we HAVE overcome, and the struggle is safely behind us.

Greater, more searching tests are always, in the wisdom of God, likely to lie ahead -

"Every branch that beareth fruit, he PURGETH it, that it may bring forth MORE fruit" (John 15:2).

Growcott

Bro. G. V.

The Truth's Side

The truth creates “sides;” the for-it side, and the against-it side; and between these two sides there is no neutral ground. He that is not for me, saith Jesus, is against me; and he styled himself “the truth.” If we are for the truth, we cannot encamp with the enemy, and co-operate with them. Being for the truth, it will place us in the minority, and identify us with those who suffer tribulation for the truth’s sake. He that runs with the hare, but holds with the hounds, will never save the fugitive from being worried to death.

There were men in the days of Jesus who would preach his doctrine, and not speak lightly of him, but would also carefully avoid identification with his unsavoury name. This is referable to the pride of life, love of popularity, or to some other equally unworthy thing. It is certainly a course not prompted by a devotion to the truth, or a love of righteousness. Moses acted not thus. He renounced the throne and treasures of Egypt for the society of enslaved brickmakers. Such a course evinces indecision of character which cannot be approved of the Lord when he appears.....Let these hints be ingenuously considered by those who admit the right, but still the wrong pursue.

Bro. John Thomas

The Deep Things Of God: The Wolf

The nature of this animal is well known. He will stop at nothing in the gratification of his hunger, provided he runs no risk. He attacks the weak and shies at the strong. In contrast to the sheep, he represents the rapacious character which is common in the world — headstrong, unscrupulous, merciless men who will sacrifice everything but their own skins in the accomplishment of personal ends. They prefer the weak for their prey. Therefore, the sheep are their especial victims, because the true sheep are not given to fighting.

"The wolf catcheth the sheep and scattereth them." The wolf may be taken to represent any danger that arises to the sheep, but more particularly the one danger with which the name of the wolf is particularly associated in the sayings of Christ and the apostles — the spiritual wolf. This wolf is given to disguises. If he came in his open character, the sheep would flee. So he puts on the fleece. He professes to be a true and humble sheep, and above all, a tending sheep, a bell-weather, a kind of shepherd sheep. With holy tone and pious grimace, he gets on the weak side of his victims, and has them in his jaws before they are aware, and feeds and feasts on them without them knowing it, for he has the art of magnetising his subjects so that they feel no pain in the process of deglutition, and see not that their bones and flesh are slowly disappearing down his gullet.

These are false teachers, clever men of shallow intellect and no conviction, who live by their wits in the religious realm. They have always been a numerous tribe, as at this day. Jesus foresaw their activity, and

forewarned his disciples. "Beware of false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." Paul also foretold their advent and success when the restraint of his presence should be removed: "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Even of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20: 29, 30).

Elsewhere, he speaks of them as "evil men and seducers," who should "wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). By their ravages, the sheepfold of the apostolic age became emptied and desolate soon after the apostles' death. The fleece-clothed wolves "caught the sheep and scattered them" ...

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Bro. Robert Roberts

What Does That Mean?

“He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.”
(2 Kings 18:5)

This is the record of Hezekiah, which appears to make him the greatest king of Judah. However, as we continue to read the history of Judah, we come to the record of king Josiah in 2 Kings 23:25, where we read: “And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.”

These two verses appear to be mutually exclusive; how can they be reconciled?

These two men were commended and remembered for two different things. Hezekiah lived in a time when Assyria was expanding into the Middle East. The Assyrians are noted in history as a very cruel and ruthless nation. Extreme methods of torture were used to bring nation after nation to their destruction. The northern Kingdom of Israel fell during Hezekiah’s reign, and his own kingdom of Judah was surrounded and brought to the very brink of destruction on several occasions. In the midst of these crises, Hezekiah suffered personal illness and came close to death.

In spite of the terrible afflictions of the time, Hezekiah was noted for his trust in Yahweh throughout it all. “He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.” (2 Kings 18:5)

Josiah, on the other hand, lived in a different time. Judah had long ago lost the Book of the Law and was steeped in idolatry. When Josiah found the Book, he did all that was in his power—and with great enthusiasm—to get the nation to put the Law of Moses back into practice. We are told concerning the

Passover that Josiah kept: “And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept.” (2 Chronicles 35:18)

Josiah made every attempt to get the nation back to following the Law, but failed, as the people’s hearts were not in it; they simply observed the commands of Josiah as law, but did not enter into the spirit of what they were observing. Thus, his great reform failed. Nevertheless, we read of him : “And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.” (2 Kings 23:25)

Brethren and sisters, we must develop that profound reverence and love for Yahweh’s Word, and turn to it with all our heart as Josiah did, so that when we face a time of crisis, we may be able to respond with a trust in Yahweh like unto Hezekiah’s.