

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 The Berean Christadelphians 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

DETROIT, Michigan –Memorial, 10am; S.S., 1:15am; Wed. Night Class, 7pm;
Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, MI 48035, 586-790-2156

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Loving Greetings in Christ,

We continue to meet with Bro. Bob and Sis. Mary Widding, of the Conway Ecclesia by Skype. We share giving the exhortations every other week. When we preside, Sis. Kay and Sis. Ruthie play the hymns. When they preside, Sis. Mary plays the hymns. It has been very encouraging for all of us.

We have been blessed with visits from Bro. Lynn Osborne, of the Denver Ecclesia and from Bro. Jim Rankin, of the Tenn. Ecclesia. They come thru while doing their trucking business. We appreciate that both of them have given us words of exhortation. We also enjoyed a visit from our Bro. John and Sis. Mary Phillips. We were thankful for words of exhortation from Bro. John also.

Our Sunday School is now studying the second volume of Eureka.

We pray that all of our brothers and sister are well and holding fast to their faith, as we witness these last days before Christ returns. We look forward to the soon coming Kingdom.

On behalf of the Detroit Berean Ecclesia, Bro. Fred J. Higham

LIRA TOWN, Uganda

Hello Bro. Bob. It is great that we have baptised four candidates at Lira Town yesterday and they are: **Bro. Sam Oling** and his sister wife **Betty Akono**, **Sis.Saron Akullo** the wife of Bro. Moses Ocen, **Sis. Evaline Akello**, the baptisms took place at a river called Okole. We are happy that the new ecclesia has now birthed. You may pray for Lira Town ecclesia to be strong. Today we, along with Bro. Epa Wekati, have started our trip to Apac district and it will also take two days Lord willing. Our trips are good because of your prayers. I will let you know more. May the peace of the Lord be with you.

Love in Christ, Bro. Dennis

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

CANTON ECCLESIAL PICNIC..... **Aug 27–28, 2011**

Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 1-330-494-7717

CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... **Oct 8–9, 2011**

Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 1-330-494-7717

GOLDTHWAITE STUDY WEEKEND..... **Nov 25–27, 2011**

Bro. Curtis Hurst, 250 CR 517, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

This Man Shall Be the Peace

“Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old”—Micah 7:20

THE PROPHECY OF MICAH

WE are reading together the prophecy of Micah. Why do we read these things?—this book written nearly 3000 years ago about the sins and calamities of people of a different age, long since dead: sins which we are not likely to be in a position to commit—idolatry, oppression of the poor, witchcraft, physical violence against our neighbors?

These things sometimes seem repetitious, and irrelevant, and monotonous. What value and interest do they have for us in this so “enlightened” and exciting 20th century A.D.?

We read these things because they are the eternal Word of God to man—the one tangible thing we can hold in our hands that connects us to eternity.

We read them because these things are written for our admonition, our instruction, our training and development in godliness. The sins may be different, but the basic struggle is the same—the struggle against the deceptiveness and stupidity of our natural flesh that wants to take us down the glittering path of death—that wants us to cast aside the joys of eternity for the silly, passing, exciting, half-pleasures of the present, that always leave us unhappy and unsatisfied and craving for more.

We read these things to fill our minds and hearts and thoughts with the wholesome and pure and exalted things of the Spirit, and thus to become spiritually-minded, which is life and peace—and to clear out of our minds all the natural little pots and pans rubbish of the passing present. Pots and pans have their place—an essential place—but a very, very SMALL place in the spiritual mind.

We read these things that, through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope—hope and joy in a hopeless and joyless world. The world has excitement. It has brief gratification. It has many silly and childish activities that it quaintly and rather pathetically calls “pleasures”—like beating some object back and forth with a stick. It calls these things pleasures because it does not know or comprehend what REAL joy and pleasure and satisfaction actually is. It uses just the little, bottom, animal part of its brain.

We read these things because this is our one precious lifeline of Light to keep us from sinking in the dark, dead ocean of the world.

CHAPTER ONE

Micah 1:1—Micah prophesied in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, some time in the 50 years between 750 and 700 BC—nearly 3000 years ago, half way back to Adam. He prophesied concerning Samaria and Jerusalem: Israel and Judah.

Millions, yea, billions of people have come and gone since the days of Micah. All are forever perished and forgotten, but he remains with us in the eternal record. Why?

Because, in his brief passing day, he had the wisdom to cast off the world and cast in his lot faithfully and wholeheartedly with the things of eternity; while they—the forgotten billions—chased the infantile “pleasures” of the present.

Jotham and Hezekiah were good kings—two of the best. Ahaz—in between—son of Jotham and father of Hezekiah, was one of the most wicked and corrupt.

Jotham is a strange and shadowy figure. He did right before God; nothing adverse is recorded concerning him; he was a great builder—he “*built cities and castles and towers.*” He was a great conqueror. He became mighty, it is recorded, because he “*prepared his ways before the Lord his God.*” But so little is recorded concerning him—no personal details at all (2 Kg. 15:32-38; 2 Ch. 27).

Though he was personally among the best of the kings, we are told that in his reign “*the people did yet corruptly*” (2 Ch. 27:2). This is the sad key to many things—

“The people did yet corruptly.”

How unnecessarily sad! That the people, blessed with so many blessings—shown the way of wisdom—should be so stupid! They did not think they were corrupt. They were offended at the suggestion. “What do we do wrong?” they often said, as reported by the prophets. They just acted naturally, like natural people, and everything they did seemed perfectly all right to them. But everything outside the narrow spiritual way of life is corruption and death.

Hosea and Isaiah were already prophesying when Micah began in the reign of Jotham. They had been prophesying since the previous reign of Uzziah, Jotham’s father. Amos had been, too, but his ministry was now ended. It was a period of crisis, and of great prophetic activity. The end of Israel’s kingdom was at hand, and Judah came perilously close to

destruction also, but was saved by Hezekiah's faith.

We learn from Jer. 26 that Micah was very instrumental in helping to bring about the reforms under Hezekiah which temporarily saved Judah from annihilation. It is Micah's ch. 3 that Jeremiah mentions as influencing the people of Judah—

“Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps” (v. 12).

800 years later, in its final desolation under Titus, Zion actually and literally was ceremoniously plowed by the Roman soldiers, as a mark and symbol of its complete and permanent destruction. And when the walls were later rebuilt, the city moved northward and the original hill of Zion was left outside, so that ever since it has remained open fields—current aerial photographs still show it so.

There are two great lessons in Micah for us—as timely today as the day they were written—a lesson of warning and a lesson of hope.

1:—Sin WILL be punished. There is no outwitting or outmaneuvering God. He has said, very simply and clearly, that obedience and spirituality will bring happiness and life; disobedience and fleshliness will bring sorrow and death.

It is so very simple and very conclusive, so tragically confirmed by all human history, especially Israel's; yet so few seem to get the point. Most allow themselves to be deceived by the subtlety of the flesh, and feel that they can, in their own special case, please the flesh and still have God's treasures.

Why are “intelligent” people who should know better SO stupid about this one thing—the most important of all? Because they don't make the EFFORT—they don't see the NECESSITY—of getting these prophecies, this Word of God, sharply enough into their minds and consciousness—

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

—and Faith is the one thing we've got to have more of than anything else if we are to have any hope of overcoming. Faith is the wisdom and the power to put first things FIRST, and keep them there.

And 2:—The glorious end of all things WILL be accomplished, and all present things, good and bad are working toward that end. As we stand back and view the great sweep of history, and as—with the slow passage of time—these once terrible calamities fall into their proper perspective in the plan of God, we are assured, and we realize, that all is for a wise purpose.

The people of God suffer and struggle now for their own good and training. The wicked prosper because they do not matter. This is their passing day. Let them have it to the full. The Assyrians prospered while Israel suffered. The Assyrians are gone forever, but Israel continues still.

“Thou wilt perform the Truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

The nation of Israel and its long history is the type of each individual. Here on a vast scale written across the pages of history, God manifests and reveals His way with those who are called according to His purpose: trying, disciplining, developing, sometimes terribly punishing, but finally—for the true remnant that endures all in faith—blessing and purifying and perfecting.

V.2: *“Hear, all ye people.”* This call is for us. We do well to give heed. It is said that those who ignore the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them.

Vs. 3-4: The Lord cometh forth in terrible judgment, melting the mountains and tearing the valleys. It is a symbol of tremendous destruction and upheaval. Israel’s world was coming to a violent end, and soon the scene will be repeated on a worldwide scale. Only those who in wisdom have chosen the merciful chambers of the Lord will escape.

Vs. 6-7: Samaria shall be utterly destroyed. And so it was, soon after. After the bitter sufferings of a 3-year siege, its inhabitants were driven away in chained, naked gangs as slaves. These were just ordinary people, doing ordinary things, pleasing themselves, ignoring God’s commands.

The rest of the chapter is the similar coming judgment on Judah. Judah witnessed Samaria’s dreadful end, but heeded not the lesson.

CHAPTER TWO

Ch. 2:1-2: Injustice in Judah. Though they were all the chosen children and close family of God, they oppressed and abused one another. Civil war is always the bitterest war. The closer the relationship, the deeper the feeling—either for good or for ill. Most murders are in the family.

We must be careful of this among ourselves. We are the family of God, very closely knit together. Our closeness must be for good, and for comfort, and for patience, and for strength—never for bitterness or antagonism.

We tend to take our own people for granted, and to let our feelings and actions run free with a harshness and rudeness we’d never show to strangers. The only preventative of this is ever-increasing kindness and love in the spirit.

Vs. 3-5: They would be utterly spoiled and lose all their heart-set worldly possessions; and so it later came to pass.

V. 6: *“Don’t prophesy to us!”* Mind your own business and don’t tell us how to run our private lives! So the stupidity of the flesh has always reacted to exhortation.

V. 7: Are your calamities because God’s power to help you is limited? Or because He does not care? Doesn’t God’s Word always bring true peace of mind and happiness to those who obey it? Show a case where it is otherwise!

Vs. 8-9: It is their own wickedness that brings their trouble.

V. 10: The ultimatum: “Your opportunity has passed! Get out! Go into captivity. The land is polluted.” They could not recognize the pollution, because it must be spiritually discerned by the Light of the Word of God.

V. 11: They want no prophets except those false ones who will flatter them and preach prosperity.

Vs. 12-13: A joyful, merciful break in a message of gloom. The final deliverance and regathering—gathered together as scattered sheep.

The “Breaker” is come to them. Another strange and significant expression. Christ is the Breaker—to break open the gates of death; to break through their enemies; to break the barriers of their captivity; and above all, to break them and their fleshly spirit, so they may be acceptable to God.

V. 13: *“Their King shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them.”*

CHAPTER THREE

Ch. 3:1-3: Those commissioned to administer the Law of Moses did not themselves obey that Law. How typical! This is a universal failing.

We so easily fall into the same pattern. So quick to criticize and apply the Law of Christ to the sins of others. So slow and so blind to see its deep and searching application to every activity of our own lives. If we judged ourselves as eagerly as we judge others, what a loving, wonderful, spiritual, unearthly community we would be!

We would be at all the meetings, instead of seeking our ease elsewhere. We would put aside everything of the world, everything of our own pleasures; and every thought and moment would be consecrated to the service of God in love! Let us take care of the INNER part first, so we may stand some chance at the judgment seat of Christ.

“Let him that is without sin cast the first stone.”

Truly none are completely sinless, but we are sinless in God’s sight IF we are covered by Christ, and IF we strive to put away all the things of the world.

But if we are willing to condone and justify in ourselves any worldly activity or affiliation, for pleasure or for profit, then we are blind hypocrites when we condemn others.

V.4: *“They shall cry unto the Lord, but He will not hear them.”*

We assume that, when we have had enough of the flesh and the world, we can just run back to God at any time and He will be happy to receive and take care of us.

Truly He is infinitely merciful, and He extended mercy and patience to Israel time after time. For this we can be thankful. But any beforehand, calculated presumption upon His mercy is the utmost of folly, and doomed to sorrow. God is not mocked—*“As a man soweth; so shall he reap.”*

Vs. 6-7: *“Night shall be unto you . . . The sun shall go down over the prophets . . . There is no answer of God.”*

The ministry of the prophets was one of God’s greatest blessings to Israel. Here were inspired men of God, living right among them, whom they could follow and be safe. But they always sought false prophets and persecuted those who told them the Truth.

At last, 300 years after Micah, in the days of Malachi, the prophetic ministry ceased. It shone brilliantly and briefly 400 years later in John, Jesus and the apostles, then went out again, and left Israel and the world to 2000 years of darkness and evil Gentile night.

V. 8: *“But truly (says Micah) I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.”*

A very powerful verse—a verse for us to consider deeply. We have the words of the prophets—let us heed them.

Vs. 9-11: The heads and rulers abhor judgment and pervert equity, the priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money.

This (we remember from the words of Jeremiah) was in the days of the good king Hezekiah, for this was the very prophecy of Micah to which Jeremiah refers. How could this be in Hezekiah’s day?

It gives us a revealing picture of the entrenched and deep-rooted corruption in high places with which Hezekiah had to contend—of the largely single-handed battle he fought.

V.12: *“Therefore shall Zion be plowed as a field.”* And it HAS been—for 2000 years.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ch. 4:1-2 *“But—* Here is a change. A complete reversal from desolation to world dominion—

“BUT in the LAST DAYS, the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains.

“And many nations shall say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.

“And the Law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

No more corruption and confusion as at present under man’s evil rule, but one universal law of righteousness.

V. 3: *“Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation.”*

What a glorious change from man’s evil history! War has always been his principal occupation. Again just yesterday (Dec. 4, 1971), 2 large nations went to war, as all nations continually have, like vicious animals. And yet man makes such pious and pompous pretensions of being mature and civilized.

V. 4: *“They shall sit every man under his vine and his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid.”*

Again, what a tremendous contrast to the evil present, with crime and violence doubling every 5 to 10 years, and getting closer and closer to all of us! How unerringly the prophetic Spirit of God puts its finger on the outstanding evils of these latter days of proud man’s glorious civilization—war and violence, oppression, injustice and corruption. The US news media are constantly reporting police and political corruption on a larger and larger scale, reaching into the highest places; and this is one of the world’s supposedly more just and advanced and democratic societies.

It is very interesting that these verses appear almost word for word in Isa. 2. Isaiah was contemporary with Micah, and very active in the affairs of Hezekiah. Clearly this double witness is to focus our attention on this remarkable prophecy of the glorious coming reign of Christ.

Vs. 6-8: *“In THAT DAY will I assemble her that halteth ... And make her a strong nation, and the Lord shall reign over them in Mt. Zion for ever ... And the Kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.”*

Truly a glorious destiny for Israel, the people of God, after all their travail has passed away! But in the meantime a long night of sorrow lay before them.

V. 10: *“Thou shalt go even to Babylon.”*

Assyria was the then-current world power and oppressor, and Babylon at this time was of no power. But both Micah and Isaiah point to Babylon as the destined oppressor and destroyer of Judah, as Assyria was to be of Israel.

“There the Lord shall redeem thee.”

Deliverance from Babylon should come in its time. Deliverance did come in 70 years from literal Babylon, but Judah was again carried captive centuries later into the much more terrible Babylon of universal Rome, where it is still scattered and oppressed unto this day.

V. 11: *“Now also many nations are gathered against thee that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.”*

How strange and how wonderful that today, 2700 years later, we see these same nations surrounding Israel, barking like mad dogs, still seeking her destruction and backed up in their evil enterprise by Russia and the Papacy; for the Pope has never recognized Israel’s existence, but has visited and fawned on her Arab enemies.

V. 12: *“But they know not the thoughts of the Lord ... for He shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.”*

Here is Armageddon—the gathering of Gog and the False Prophet of Rome and their bands for destruction on the mountains of Israel.

V. 13: *“Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make thine horn iron and thy hooves brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people, and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord.”*

This has never yet occurred. This is the “Great Day of God Almighty.” How wonderfully we see things shaping up today before our eyes for this long-foretold and now soon-coming climax!

CHAPTER FIVE

Ch. 5 contains Micah’s best-known prophecy: the vital item of information concerning the Messiah that Micah alone was privileged to supply—

V. 2: *“But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the 1000’s of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel.”*

This was the prophecy to which the chief priests and scribes immediately pointed when Herod asked them where the Messiah should be born. They took the prophecy simply and literally, and of direct divine origin, and they were sure of their ground—and they were absolutely right. Even so will the other prophecies be just as literally and surely fulfilled.

In v. 5 is another well-known and important prophecy—

“This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land.”

We see the vicious Assyrian today, like the Assyrian of old, gathering his forces to carry out his evil thought against Israel, and blasphemously defying Israel’s God.

“This man shall be the peace.” Not just give peace, but BE peace. Christ IS peace. There is no peace outside of him and we seek it in vain when we seek it anywhere else. But how long it takes foolish man to learn this so simple and easy lesson!—

“GREAT peace have they that love Thy law.”

“There is NO peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

“Thou wilt keep him in PERFECT peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.”

Israel never learned—shall we be so foolish, too?

“Then shall we raise against him 7 shepherds and 8 principal men.”

Seven is completeness and perfection. Eight is a new beginning. Does this refer to a particular 15 men? Bro. Thomas suggests Christ plus the 14 (double 7) who dominate the New Testament picture: John the Baptist, Paul, and the 12 apostles.

Vs. 7 and 8 are a striking contrast, but they are harmonious parts of the whole—

“The remnant of Judah shall be as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass.”

“The remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles as a lion amongst sheep, who treadeth down and teareth in pieces.”

These are two essential aspects of Israel's latterday work with the nations—to discipline and to bless.

“The Kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.”

The rest of chapter 5 is the final purification of Israel itself.

There is much more of interest in this book of Micah. The next two chapters each have their well-known quotation—

CHAPTER SIX

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (v. 8)

“Justice, mercy and faith”—the things which Jesus calls the *“weightier matters of the Law”* (Matt. 23:23).

Can we honestly say that we “love mercy”—that this is our basic way of life? What does it mean, to love mercy? Let us think about that a lot. It is the key to many things—“LOVE MERCY.” It will open our understanding to many things. It is a beautiful, Christlike characteristic.

We will find that “loving mercy” is very closely related to “walking humbly”—in fact, they are inseparable, and they complement each other. They are two sides of the same godly character. “Come and see my zeal for the Lord” is often the voice of pride.

CHAPTER SEVEN

In ch. 7 there is another prophecy unique to Micah (vs. 15-16)—

“According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might.”

It is this passage, in conjunction with several others, and the general fitness of things, that led bro. Thomas to the conclusion that the events of the “last days”—the transition period between the evil night of the Gentiles and the glorious day of the Lord—would consume 40 years, one generation, to purge and purify the earth.

Training must begin in early childhood. Today there is little discipline: only increasing wildness and self-will: a proud, willful, lawless generation. A new generation must come up, taught in the wisdom of God and not the folly of the world, before the earth will be fit for Christ's Kingdom. A generation of the earth must perish in the wilderness.

Finally, the transcendent beauty of Micah's closing words (18-20)—

“Who is a God like unto Thee ...”

This is a play on Micah’s own name. The full form is Micaiah, “Who is like Yah?”

“ ...that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy.

“He will turn again; He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities” (A strange expression!).

—He WILL subdue our iniquities, if we will let Him—if we will call upon Him—if we really want our very pleasant iniquities subdued. There is no other way to peace, and we cannot do it ourselves, but we must be mature enough and have enough sense to really desire to get rid of our fleshly and worldly desires—

“ ... and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

And the final glorious assurance of the Everlasting Covenant—

“THOU WILT PERFORM THE TRUTH TO JACOB AND THE MERCY TO ABRAHAM, WHICH THOU HAST SWORN UNTO OUR FATHERS FROM THE DAYS OF OLD!”

—*Bro. G.V. Growcott*

The Bible—the Book that Reveals the Future

When we speak of the prophets, it is well to keep in mind that there are three acceptations of the word—

1. One who speaks or expounds.
2. One who speaks or interprets a message he has received from God.
3. One who is sent by God to reveal something with respect to the future.

We understand that the Jews recognized 48 prophets. Two of the greatest of these left no writings of their own—Elijah and Elisha.

Among the 16 prophets, whose books are found in the Old Testament, ten lived before the captivity (Jonah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk). Three lived under the captivity (Daniel, Obadiah, and Ezekiel). Three lived after the captivity (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi).

Among those who left no writing, is John the Baptist, the last prophet of the old dispensation. Jesus said of him—*“Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet.”*

John’s prophesying, however, comes more particularly under the second classification as one who speaks or interprets a message he has received from God. His father’s words, Luke 1:76-79—

“And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

The substance of the teaching throughout Christendom today is that the revelation from God contained in the Bible rests exclusively on the saving of men’s souls. While we admit that personal salvation, at the appearance of Christ and the resurrection is of the utmost importance to the individual, yet there stands out from the pages of Scripture the fact that Yahweh has a mighty work to perform in the earth.

It is the third class that is to receive our attention, i.e., “Those who were sent by God to reveal something with respect to the future.”

That the Hebrew prophets did foretell future events is a fact far beyond dispute. Let the doubter examine the prophecies and compare them with the history of events that followed, and he will most surely come to the conclusion of Nebuchadnezzar—*“That the Most High God rules in the Kingdom of Men.”*

He will see that governments are born and nations rise to supremacy, and when they have answered the purpose for which they were permitted to exist, their authority is transferred to others who, in their order, have missions to perform. These facts will explain the rise and fall of kingdoms and governments in all ages.

The fulfillment of prophecy is an unimpeachable evidence of the divine inspiration of the prophets. It is an unquestionable proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures.

If we find events predicted long before they occurred, if they were so clearly described that, when completed, the description applies accurately to the subject, and if they were related by a prophet who died many years prior to the fulfillment, does it not clearly demonstrate that a Power, far superior to man, has been pleased to reveal His purpose with the earth and man upon it. 2 Peter 1:19-21—

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Divine inspiration is the only explanation. Therefore, Peter says, *“We have a more sure word of prophecy.”* But why then do we ask the question, did the Hebrew prophets foretell future events?

Well, friends we ask the question because there are leaders in professing Christian communities who doubt that the prophets did foretell future events. We quote a Rev. T. M. Fothergill:

“To the Editor of The Star. Sir: In the advertisement of subjects of Sunday sermons which one sees in the Toronto papers it is often stated that someone is to preach on the subject of prophecy. Not being able to hear these discourses I often wonder just what is said about prophecy, and if it is still regarded much the same as it was in Bishop Butler’s day. That good old bishop once wrote that prophecy was “nothing but the history of events before they came to pass,” though it is doubtful if any worthwhile scholar today would pin his faith to such a declaration, so greatly have Bible students moved away from the old conception of prophecy. Some of the old books on prophecy which we used in my student days are only of value as relics of by-gone days, and ought to be placed in Ford’s museum along with George Stephenson’s locomotive.

“Judging from the Christian evidences of today, prophecy is regarded in a very different light from what it was fifty years ago. As a source of Christian evidence it does not possess anything like its evidential value that our fathers saw in it. Formerly the office of a prophet was regarded as chiefly that of a foreteller of events; as one who spoke of events that were yet to come, in the near or distant future, whereas it is now seen that a prophet was more of preacher of righteousness than a foreteller of future events. Some prophets did not foretell future things at all.”

Another critic, speaking of Peter’s words, says, “I have no doubt that many now base their belief in divine inspiration on these words. Peter, however, referred only to certain misconstrued and misinterpreted prophecies, not one of which was ever fulfilled, and this fact obviously precludes any justification for believing that Peter or these holy men were supernaturally inspired.”

This critic, however, was very careful not to mention any of the prophecies which he claims were never fulfilled.

But, let us put the prophecies to the test, as Jeremiah says, “*When the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known that the Lord truly sent him*” (Jer. 28:9).

Prophecies of Moses – Deut 28:15-37—”*But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.*

Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The LORD shall make the rain of the land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away.

The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.

Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a

vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof. Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them.

Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in thine hand.

The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway: so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, and with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head. The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.”

This was a prophecy spoken approximately 3300 years ago. Has it been fulfilled? Now read verses 49-53—

“The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed; which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.”

The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, A.D. 70—Titus, the Roman general, with an army of 60,000 appeared before the city in April. It was Passover week; the city was crowded with about 1-1/4 million people. Titus cut off all food supplies and for 3-1/2 years this terrible siege continued. Men and women crazed by hunger killed and ate their

own children. Upwards of one million were slain and the remainder sold as slaves. Moses' prediction 1450 years before was fulfilled to the very letter.

Another prophecy concerning this nation is just as remarkable, Luke 21:20-24—*"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

To a certain extent, this prophecy seems incomplete, but it is because it is based on other prophecies made over 600 years before through Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Jer. 30:11 – *"For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."*

Jer. 31:10 – *"Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock."*

Jer. 32:37 – *"Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely."*

Ezek. 37:21 – *"And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land."*

Here, in Luke, we have predicted: 1. The destruction of Jerusalem; 2. The dountreading by the Gentiles; and, 3. The restoration to the homeland. How has it been fulfilled?

1917 – The dountreading ceased. The Turk was driven from the land. The British Mandate was pronounced. The children of Israel began to return to the land. Consult Elpis Israel, Part III, Chapter VI.

What does it say about Babylon—

Isaiah 13:19-22 – *“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.”*

Isaiah 14:22-23 – *“For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

The destruction was so complete that Bible critics maintained for years that such a place never existed. In the Spring of 1899 German explorers started work and their excavations have produced rich results. Much of the city lies uncovered today and many clay tablets were found, proving the Bible record to be absolutely true.

Among the prophecies relating to Christ, Moses wrote in Deut. 18:18, *“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”*

And David wrote in II Samuel 7:12, *“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.”*

The fulfillment is recorded in the New Testament—

Luke 1:32-33 – *“He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”*

Acts 2:29-30 – *“Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.”*

Look at Isaiah 53:7-8 and Acts 8:32-35—

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

“The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”

And look at Micah 5:2, then Matthew 2:3-6—

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose going forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

“When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.”

In the remarkable prophecy of Daniel, chapter 7, we have the vision of the four beasts. Verses 1-3—

“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.”

This vision refers to the same subject as the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2. There we have a metallic figure in human form. Daniel 2:31-33—

“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.”

The interpretation is given—

Verses 37-38 – *“Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.”*

This is represented by the lion in chapter 7, first with eagles’ wings—the symbol of the Assyrian Dynasty when Nineveh was capital. He beheld till the wings were plucked. The plucking of the eagle wings of the Assyrian lion represents the overthrow of the Assyrian Dynasty by the king of Babylon who transferred the seat of government from Nineveh to Babylon. The lion was made to stand on its feet as a man. Nebuchadnezzar was the conqueror and more of a man-type than those he succeeded, as we are aware by his expression in Daniel 4:34-35—

“And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”

In Daniel 7:5, the bear is the same as the breasts and arms of silver, representing the Medo-Persian Empire. This empire was extended by conquest, thereby devouring much flesh. The three ribs apparently signifying the three presidents who were placed over the 127 provinces, extending from India to Ethiopia.

In Daniel 7:6, the leopard, and the belly and thighs of brass of Daniel 2, are the third kingdom that bear rule over all the earth—the Grecian Empire. Alexander the Great was the conqueror of the Medo-Persian Empire, but only ruled over his great conquests for six years. After the death of Alexander, the leopard dominion was divided into four sections represented by the four wings and four heads of the leopard (BC 301).

In Daniel 7:7, the fourth beast with ten horns is the same as the legs, feet and toes of iron of the image. History tells us that the leopard dominion or Grecian Empire was superseded by the Roman Empire. Look at this verse—

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.”

Compare with Daniel 2:40-41—*“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.”*

Nothing is said about the head of the fourth beast but that it had ten horns.

Of the ten toes of the image, history tells us that in the fifth century after Christ the Roman Empire was broken up into ten parts. Daniel 2:42-43—*“And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.”*

These have remained as unto this day for the Roman Empire has never been superseded.

The prophecy to this stage has been fulfilled to the very letter. Shall we then hesitate to believe that the remainder of the vision will be fulfilled? Why should we? Daniel says the dream is certain and interpretation is sure.

Verses 44-45 – *“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”*

Now see 7:9-10 and 13-14—*“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. . . I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”*

Additional unfulfilled prophecy: Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39; Isaiah 2:2-4; Jeremiah 33:14-16; Revelation 22:16.

We do not live in the age of the prophets, but we do live in the age of fulfilled prophecy. And we are able to look back and see—

Babylon overthrown by Persia

Persia overthrown by Greece

Greece overthrown by Rome

Rome broken up into 10 parts

Moab and Syria desolated

Jesus born at Bethlehem, despised and rejected, wounded and slain in the house of his friends

Israel dispersed among the nations

Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles until 1917

And now in our day, we see Israel returning to their own land.

This mighty record of prophecy fulfilled is complete evidence before our eyes of the truth of what Paul says, *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets”* (Hebrews 1:1), and is also an infallible assurance that other great prophecies will be fulfilled—

1. That Christ will return
2. That the dead will be raised
3. That he will restore again the kingdom to Israel, and

4. Sit upon the throne of his father David, and

5. Rule over the House of Jacob forever and of his Kingdom there will be no end.

Then, as the prophet declared, Death will be swallowed up in victory—

“And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it” (Isaiah 25:6-8).

—and may it be your happy lot to be among those mentioned in v.9—

“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

—Bro. George A. Gibson

Encouraging Words No. 23

“LOOK not every man (or woman) on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” This is one of the lessons set for us by Paul. Have we learnt it? Those, for instance, who are given to hospitality, to an extent perhaps to which we could never approach, do we look upon such, and, realising our own inability, do we honour and esteem them for their work?

Do we consider those who, through much patient labour and self-denial, have turned many from darkness to light, and, though we may be able to show no such record, do we rejoice at having such zealous, faithful sisters in our midst? Do we ponder the fidelity of those who, having nought but alien influences at home, yet by their attitude to the truth show greater love for Christ than for father, mother, sister, and brother, albeit the daily cross which these sisters bear is foreign to our experience? Do we think of the sister with few opportunities and mediocre ability, and note the wise use to which she is putting her one talent, remembering that from our possibly larger sphere of influence and greater ability proportionate results will be expected? The application of Paul’s lesson could be greatly extended, for have we not sisters who

minister to the sick, who cheer the afflicted, who support the meetings, who give away literature, who are forward in every good work? Do we look upon the labours of such in the way indicated by Paul? If so, we can rejoice that we are making progress in divine things. On the other hand, if we are wont to condemn all whose service is not of the same measure and pattern as our own, there is something wrong, and we require to readjust our views.

To master Paul's lesson in regard to looking upon the things of others, is to simplify a still more difficult lesson which the apostle has set, viz., "Let each esteem other better than themselves." Let us have clear ideas of what Paul intended to convey by this injunction, lest we put upon it a meaning other than was intended. Does Paul mean that the sister who excels in the art of needlework should look upon one who can scarcely run a seam as better able to conduct a sewing class than herself? Does he mean that a sister who is proficient in music should regard one who is devoid of this gift as better able to perform the instrumental part of a service than herself? Impossible. Paul does not talk nonsense. What he would impress upon us is that the sister of brilliant parts is neither to overlook the service of her apparently less-gifted sister, nor to fail to recognise that Christ, who looks at the heart, may bestow more commendation upon such an one than upon herself, inasmuch as far more effort may have been put forth by the one for the accomplishment of little, than by the other for the accomplishment of much.

By way of illustration, let us suppose our musical sister with her Sundays free. She is able to get to the meetings without difficulty, and the effort it may cost her to preside at the instrument is counterbalanced by the knowledge that she is performing a useful part in the service. Let us next suppose a sister with a husband unfriendly to the truth. This sister receives an unwilling permission to attend the meeting. In order to leave things straight at home, so that the ungracious permission may not be withheld another time, she arrives a little late. That her husband may find no just cause for complaint she hurries off directly the proceedings are ended. Is there any comparison between the respective efforts which these two sisters have put forth in order to show their love to Christ? Unless Paul's two lessons were heeded, might not the one sister be tempted to look upon herself as an exemplary helper of the meetings and therefore of far more value in Christ's eyes than the other sister?

A still more pointed illustration is to be found in connection with the widow's mite. How many who cast their gifts into the treasury would have esteemed the poor widow better than themselves? Let us remember

that the principle which underlies Christ's lesson can be applied not only to money but to time, opportunities, ability, yea, to all that we possess.

Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1908

Meditations – Deity's Ways No. 22

NO eternal life for the man who governs not his tongue! This is the purport of James' words: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, *this man's religion is vain.*" Woe to the careless gossip and spiteful critic! Let the wise take heed. Let them reflect before they speak. God's Word cannot be broken. Though grossly despised now, it will ere long be terribly and gloriously magnified. "Everyone shall receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The evil speaker is a Satan, to whom the righteous should be bold enough to say, "Get thee behind me." Who cannot testify to the truth that the man who will not bridle his tongue is a dangerous and corrupting element in the community of the saints? What mischief, what unnecessary pain, is being continually caused by the unlawful use of the tongue? No commandment that God has given has been more emphatically enforced than that relating to the tongue, and yet none has been more flagrantly ignored. In every age—the present by no means excepted—the atmosphere has been darkened by the evil effects of the tongue: evil surmise, hatred, contention, false reports, etc. Cheer up! all ye who have wrongfully suffered from the unbridled tongue of the evil speaker. Ere long it will be eternally silenced. It is permitted now to wage its deadly warfare, and for a wise and good object. Recognise the object, and take courage. It proves the children of God: it develops in them the priceless virtues of patience, forbearance, and forgiveness. Those who are born of God are to be known by their disposition to pour oil on the troubled waters, to cover sins, to think no evil. The Kingdom—rapidly approaching—is for such!

The natural man ignores God, either by denying His existence or by denying that He now puts forth His hand on behalf of His children. Practically the two attitudes are the same, and equally disastrous. Very potent is the influence of this natural man; it is an evil with which the saints have to carry on a continual conflict. How can we ensure success? Not solely by being able to promptly put our finger upon those passages that prove that God is, and that He is a near and ever present help to those that trust in Him. It is one thing to prove that the Bible teaches a certain doctrine, and another to *realise* its truth. It is the man who realises that God is at his right hand that will be victorious over the cold scepticism of the age. We can best realise God's nearness to us by laying to heart the

exemplifications of His workings as recorded in His Word. Let us keep our eyes open to these exemplifications as they occur in our daily readings. A considerable insight into the treasures that belong to this part of the World is to be obtained from brother Robert's faith-stimulating little work—*Ways of Providence*. If we wish to know the kind of faith we should have in God, let us look at Paul. If we possess his mind we shall be enabled to do what he did: faithfully endure the ups and downs of a severe and suffering probation, confidently feeling that God's eyes are upon us, and that His unerring and Almighty hand is manipulating and ordering all our ways. No conviction is more cheering and purifying than this. Bad practices and bad company will be steadfastly shunned by those who realise it.

Study nature, say some, and this will lead to nature's God. Plausible, but not true. Nature never did, and never will, reveal the mind and purpose of God. The Bible alone does this. Research in the direction of nature may confirm the Bible, when the Bible is believed. But apart from the Bible, the study of nature can only interest or bewilder. The sum and substance of the study may truly be described as "vanity and vexation of spirit." Can the student of nature tell us on what conditions God will bring a man out of the grave? No, nature is silent on this momentous question. And the very silence misleads our natural friend, for he fatally errs in supposing that death is what it appears to be, actually the end of all flesh. No; the world by its wisdom knows not God (1 Cor. 1:21). The study of nature may develop a Darwin, but not a Paul. And it is the Paul class alone that will ultimately escape the corruption of the tomb. God has not invited us to dive into the mysteries of nature in order to apprehend Him, or to prove the truth of His sacred Word. The veracity of the Bible is established on independent ground—on evidence which the unlettered and hard-working artisan and busy housewife can find time to master. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandment: for this is the whole duty of man."

A PLAUSIBLE APPEAL (from those outside the covenant): "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him." A FAITHFUL REPLY: "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel." A NATURAL RESULT: "Then the people of the land weakened the lands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building" (Ezra 4:2, 3, 4). How singularly suggestive are these facts of our experience in the erection of the antitypical temple. The children of the apostasy would join hands with us in the work, but we dare not allow them. They argue with us, but falsely, as did the enemies of Judah and Benjamin. Our faithful refusal evokes their hatred. They commence to annoy, malign, and hinder.

But there is comfort to be derived from the Old Testament record. It is written that the eye of God was upon the elders of the Jews, that their enemies could not cause them to cease from building (5:5). A blessed fact is this, divinely narrated out of love for us (Rom. 15:4). God beholds us and our opponents. He permits certain events, as in Israel's case, and prevents others. Let us be calm and trustful, however much the Satan may slander, abuse, or misrepresent. Our work is the work of God, and withstand it none can. Let us not forget that God still unobservedly influences the affairs of man. In the days of Ezra, God providentially turned the hearts of the King of Assyria and of all his mighty princes for the benefit of His people (6:27, 7:28). May we not look to Him as occasion requires for similar favour? Let us remember Paul's words: "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you always having sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

The truth is simple, though profound. It requires no unusual qualifications to apprehend it. Ordinary capacity, coupled with a good and honest heart, is all that is needed. Thanks be to God for His beneficent plan. Had He decreed otherwise, few of us (through stress of circumstances) would be able to attain to salvation. The plan is self-evidently divine. Man aims at securing the sympathies of the great and learned. But not so with God. He has chosen the poor, rich in faith. If a learned man would receive the truth, he must come down from his learning, and, like the unlearned, receive with meekness the simple Word. There must be no arraying the judgment against that Word, though the whys and wherefores of God's will may not in all things be fathomed. The simplicity in Christ places the learned and unlearned on a level. This arrangement is exceedingly distasteful to the flesh, which dotes on distinction. God's method has for one of its objects the humbling of the creature—"that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 27-29). The learning of the world is more a hindrance than a help in receiving the truth. Whatever advantages such learning may have, they are outnumbered by the disadvantages. Learning, in the great majority of cases, inflates, and inflation blinds. It is a notable fact that the greatest enemies that the truth has are to be found among the learned. Their worldly wisdom is a snare, both to themselves and their followers.

"Israel hath forgotten his Maker." Such was the Deity's declaration through Hosea. It calls for reflection on the part of us who in these days occupy a relationship similar to that of Israel. If God were to speak from heaven (which He will do presently), would He say that we had forgotten Him? A consideration of Israel's character will help us in arriving at a correct answer to the question. How had Israel forgotten their Maker?

Had they professedly repudiated God? or His word? or ceased to make any mention of His name? By no means. Their continual boast was, "The people of the Lord are we." Their reply to one who would question their religious standing was, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these." As to the Scriptures, they were painstaking to a degree to preserve them in their purity. How then had they forgotten God? Answer: They acknowledged God in lip, but denied Him in reality—in *heart* they said there was no God. If they required help, to an idolatrous nation they flew for it. If they sought counsel, to man they went. God, to them, was practically a myth; and the great things of His law they counted as a strange thing. Let us measure ourselves by these facts. Whilst acknowledging God as our Father, our Guide, and our Strength, do we in our daily walk practically reject Him? If we have not forgotten God—if He is a reality to us—then we give Him a place in all our arrangements. Then are we content to implicitly yield to His will in all things, realising the force and the beauty of His exhortation to cast all our care upon Him (1 Pet. 5:7), for He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5, 6). Brethren, let us think on these things.

Bro. A. T. Jannaway—1889

I Know Thy Works

After the Spirit's introduction of himself by stating certain of his characteristics having some special adaptation to the Star-Angel Presbytery addressed, he forthwith declares to each of the seven, "I have known thy works"—Οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου; and then proceeds to point them out, and to approve or reprobate them, as the case may be.

None of them seem to have been in so disgusting a state as this of the Laodiceans. The Ephesian was remarkable for labor, patience, and intolerance of evil doers; though they had some "liars" among them, who said they were apostles, but were not. The Smyranean was tribulated, poor in this world, but rich in faith; but not without blasphemers of the synagogue of the Satan. The Pergamian held fast the name, and had not denied the faith; yet had in it the holders of Balaam's teaching and that of the Nikolaitans. The Thyatiran was noted for love, service, faith, patience, and works more abundant than in their beginning: yet they tolerated teachers of the Jezebel type. The Sardian was dead, and the things pertaining to it ready to die; because their works were not perfect before the Deity. The Philadelphian had a little strength, had kept the word, and had not denied the name. All these had something to work upon by which the evils among them might be corrected; for even Sardis is exhorted to

“strengthen the things that remain.” But in regard to the Laodicean Star-Angel Presbytery it appears to have been in such a perfectly self-satisfied condition—in so thoroughly lukewarm a condition—that there was no possibility apparent of restoring it to health. There is no redeeming excellence cited in its favor. It was lukewarm. In an anti-amen state; unfaithful and untrue; and without zeal for the manifestation of the new creation, and therefore “ removed from the hope of the gospel.”

Being destitute of these qualities of the true believer, they delighted in the things that perish. Like professors of the nineteenth century, they said that they had need of nothing. They were rich in the wealth of the world, and high in favor with the powers that be. Being rich, they were influential in the state; and being lukewarm, they were not troublesome in bearing witness for the truth against the superstitions of the world. Hence, the world ceased to persecute them, because the world loves its own, and they had become the world's, in ceasing to testify against it.

But, though they regarded themselves so complacently, the Lord the Spirit, who seeth not as man seeth, contemplated them with great nausea and disgust. He told them that they were ignorant of their true condition; as ignorant of it as our contemporaries are of theirs.

“Thou knowest not,” says he,” that thou art the wretched, and pitiable, and poor, and blind, and naked one.” They were “wretched,” being under condemnation; they were “pitiable,” being really wretched while they deemed themselves in bliss; they were “poor,” and “blind,” being weak in faith and alienated from the life of the Deity through the ignorance that was in them; and they were “naked,” being in their sins.

Bro. John Thomas Eureka Vol. 1 Page 408

Tobacco

There are, in the Scriptures, no texts that directly address the use of tobacco. We haven't a “Thus saith the Lord, thou shalt not use tobacco.” What little we can learn about the mind of the Deity is from a few general principles. With these in view, we may then apply such to what is known of tobacco use and the medical consequences thereof.

One such principle is that the body is a temple of the holy spirit and that it is not to be defiled. Does this apply specifically to smoking? We are aware that brethren Thomas and Roberts held different views on this question. Based upon their respective writings, one would probably

answer no, and the other, yes, or by the application of principles, yes. However, to frame this issue wholly in the 19th century context would be foolish inasmuch as so much more is known today than 120 years ago. And so, from our vantage, we may draw a definitive conclusion that should leave no doubt that tobacco use is wrong.

Arguably the verse cited above has relevance. There are others that may as well. But even if there were no principles, enough is known today about tobacco use to banish it from our lives.

Tobacco kills. There is no doubt about it. The weed first addicts us, then it slowly begins a process by which the body is destroyed. Just ask a physician. Smoking begets a host of diseases, most of which can be fatal. Moreover, the unfiltered second hand smoke is even worse for those nearby.

In light of these facts, can we by any stretch of the imagination think that smoking is “of good report”? No, indeed. It hasn’t received a good report in over 40 years.

Are we suggesting that the habit, if not forsaken, will result in rejection at the judgment seat? No. It is not ours to render eternal judgments. That is the Lord’s prerogative. Recognizing the principles involved, we can exhort one another and so much more as we see the day approaching.

Shall we pester endlessly and denigrate the smokers among us? That would not be wise. Take it from an one who quit smoking some 35 years ago. It is exceedingly difficult to quit the habit. This is especially true of those who have used tobacco for many years.

What may brethren and sisters do to help? In a “tell the question” moment, a person once asked a smoker: “With all of your knowledge of medicine, and the harmful nature of smoking, I cannot understand how you continue to do it. Why do you keep on?” The smoker replied: “For me, at this point, it really has nothing to do with knowledge. It is a weakness.”

Weakness. Now that is something we should be able to relate to. We all have weaknesses. With respect to these, what we desire is help, mercy and forgiveness from the Lord in tandem with prayer, understanding and loving encouragement to overcome from brethren and sisters.

The smoker desires no less.

—*Bro. Bob Widding*

Hints For Bible Markers

Among the nations which compose merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions, there is a system of economics called the free market economy. Man considers this to be a very good and wise system. Sell things, buy things, and all is well. Are you in financial trouble? Is the economy in a recession? Buy more, so you can spend your way out of difficulties! The scriptures declare (Ecclesiastes 5:10) "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity." We live in a very bad age, where making people covetous is the goal of governments and business. The desire for the things they would have us want must be overcome if we are to be pleasing to our Heavenly Father. Solomon understood this teaching that to be covetous is vanity. Paul in writing to the Romans makes a list of character traits displeasing to God. He writes (Romans 1:29) "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers," Much of what Paul wrote here is doubled or overlapping, Covetousness can be linked with envy. *Thayer's Greek Definitions* defines envy as: greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice and Merriam-Webster says that covetousness is a synonym for envy. Paul tell us being covetous is worthy of death. (Romans 1:32) "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." The world is constantly trying to draw us in, especially with this deadly sin. We must always be on guard against covetousness, to overcome it. (1 Timothy 6:6-9) "But godliness with contentment is great gain. (7) For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. (8) And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. (9) But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

Bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

VI. CONCERNING YOUR ACTIONS

Beware of covetousness; lay not up treasure upon earth; be ready to every good work.

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. (Luke 12:15)

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: (Matthew 6:19)

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, (Titus 3:1)

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (Hebrews 13:5) And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: (Hebrews 6:11)

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9)

Beware of false teachers.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (Matthew 7:15)

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. (Philippians 3:2)

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

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