

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 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

CANTON, Ohio – Sunday School, Sunday 10:00 AM; Breaking of Bread, Sunday 11:00 AM; Bible Class Tuesday 6:00 PM; at Mayfield Senior Center, bro. Beryl Snyder, 4095 Prosway S.W. The, Massillon, Ohio, 44646

Blessed be thou of the Lord. (Judges 17:2; Ruth 3:10; 1 Sam.15:13)

We are unmistakably living in the time of the end, when the nations are preparing for the battle of Armageddon and the distress of nations with perplexity is plainly visible for all to see. “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;” (Luke 21:25) The year 2012 has come to an end. Although Christ has not returned, he cannot be far away. The thrones of judgment are soon to be set up, the wheat and chaff to be separated. Our probation will be over, Jesus will be in the Earth, the faithful will be made co-rulers with him, and equal unto the angels. As we are at the beginning of another year we must ask ourselves, are we ready? Are we fully prepared to stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Are we as polished jewels fit for God’s house?

Over the last year we have had several visitors around the table, bro. Jim Rankin, bro. John & sis. Mary Phillips, bro. Jim & sis. Kathy Sommerville, bro. Fred & sis. Ruthie Higham, sis. Kay Stinchcomb, bro. Steve and sis. Sharon Osborne. We would thank brethren Jim Rankin, John Phillips, and Steve Osborne for providing much-needed word of exhortation.

It is with sadness we must report that our sister Helen Miller has fallen and broken her shoulder. Although surgery is not required it is a painful and distressing situation for her. It must remain immobilized, making many of the daily chores extremely difficult. Our sis. Josephine (Toots) Stocker is very thankful for the cards, letters, and phone calls she has received.

We should never forget that although there are many pleasures in life, for the world has much to offer the carnal mind, there is a fiery trial waiting all God’s children. “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap:” (Malachi 3:2) Christ expects to see some reflection of his own character in us at the judgment seat. It is upon that principle that we can expect to obtain a place in the Kingdom. The time for preparation is now.

Bro. Beryl Snyder, Recorder

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**June 8–9, 2013**

Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX, 325-451-4075

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**June 28–July 1, 2013**

Sis. Christine Jones, RR# 1, Richard, Sask, S0M 2P0, Canada, sc.jones@sasktel.net

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**July–22-28 2013**

Bro. Mark Braune, 209 Ranger Dr., Buda, TX, 78610, 512-757-3088,
markbraune@gmail.com Study, “Nehemiah”

BOSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**Oct 26-27 2013**

Bro. Jim Sommerville, jsommer393@msn.com

KENYA FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**Dec 5-8 2013**

Bro. Bob Bent, eyeglassman39@yahoo.com. Epa Wekati, epawekati@yahoo.com

The BCAA

The Berean Christadelphian Audio Archives, or BCAA for short, has made available a large selection of talks on MP3 online. The address is www.bcaudioarchives.blogspot.com. Please check this link often as we will be updating with new material as much as possible.

The purpose of this site is to restore and make available lectures, exhortations, and study classes. Some of these talks are decades old and have seldom been heard.

We are always looking for tapes, and if you have some talks that you would like to share, please email Bro. Craig Kiley (craigkiley@yahoo.com) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to MP3 format and post them.

The Hand of Our God Is Upon Us

“His windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees 3 times a day, and gave thanks before his God, as aforetime”—Daniel 6:10

DAN. 3 is an inspiring record of men who chose the narrow way and who were prepared to follow it wherever it led—men who went forward from strength to strength, building for the future with purpose and determination upon a firm basis of light and reality.

Nebuchadnezzar, the personification of human pride and power, sets up an image of gold that all are commanded to worship. All through history it has been the same image in various forms, and it is the same today.

It is the image of man—60 cubits high and 6 wide. 6 is the number of man and the measure of his dominion on earth.

And, from time to time, man has demanded that the children of God worship his image. In early Christian times, all that was required to secure a believer's release from death was to throw a little incense into the sacred fires of Jupiter. A small, harmless concession, it might seem, easy to do with mental reservations, but the whole vital principal of allegiance to God or man was involved.

We are repeatedly faced with the same subtle and fatal choice in many ways today.

Daniel himself does not appear at this crisis, when his 3 companions are cast into the furnace. Apparently he was elsewhere.

But 70 years later he was faced with the same issue, and in a far more subtle form. This is recorded in ch. 6, and occurred under the Persian king Darius. This time no open act at all was demanded. All that was required was a refraining from prayer to any but the king for 30 days. And so (v. 10)—

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; And his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees 3 times a day, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”

He knew the penalty. Was he foolhardy? Why couldn't he have taken care not to be seen? Why couldn't he have closed the lattice window which is so pointedly mentioned as being open? Wouldn't common prudence have demanded at least that? God could hear just as well with it shut.

But why SHOULD he hide? Why should he be ashamed or afraid? Who has supreme power. God or man? Naaman the Syrian said (2 Kings 5:18)—

“When I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant this thing.”

But Daniel was a man of different stamp. Why should he temporize and interrupt his communion with God at the whim of a heathen monarch? It was; no sin to pray, it was his duty. And if he intended to pray, why should he hide it?

He could not have faithfully followed any other course. His allegiance to God was on trial, and he faced the issue squarely.

He did not go out of his way to flout the king's commandment. He merely ignored it, and followed his usual custom of worship, scorning subterfuge.

Our minds are turned to an action of somewhat similar nature on the part of Ezra—an action which to the eyes of cold common sense was foolhardy and rash, but which was well-pleasing to God (Ezra 8:21-23)—

“Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him, but His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and He was entreated of us”

Ezra was not overconfident or boastful. He did not presume upon the providence of God. But he did not feel he could consistently ask the help of man when he had spoken of the limitless power of his God. Others may have regarded the matter differently, but to him, the situation raised again the same issue of allegiance and dependence—God or man—and whenever that issue arises in whatever form, the answer of faith must be the same.

He well realized the responsibility he had assumed in leading his unprotected company through wild and hostile country. It is clear that this weighed heavily upon him. There were many other lives besides his own involved—many who trusted him and depended upon him, and who were prepared to make the journey with him relying on his judgment and wisdom.

It would have been far easier to have asked for an armed guard, but he felt that the honor of his God was at stake, and so in prayerful hope, and with no armor but faith, they ventured forth.

And no harm befell them.

* * *

These examples of individual courage and faith shine forth during some of Israel’s darkest years: Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel, his 3 companions, Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. Out of the deep shadow of the captivity period, these names appear as scattered beacons of faithful endurance.

For the most part, these men worked out their course alone, surrounded by bitter hostility. The support and comfort of companionship was denied them.

Daniel's intense devotion to the land and people of God is evident from his prolonged prayers on their behalf, yet in the inscrutable wisdom of God it was decreed that he should endure a long and weary lifetime in exile, with Jerusalem desolate, the sanctuary in ruins, and the people of God a derision and reproach.

And to Ezra and Nehemiah fell the thankless task of welding a few forlorn and factious remnants into a surface semblance of national unity, while the enemy derided the pitifully small results and those who remembered the former things wept at the comparison.

Discouragement at times must have assailed these men at the hopelessness of their task in their "day of small things," but a broader view of their position would carry them on.

At all times, the issue is an individual one, and the personal relation to God is the important factor. This does not change, though outward circumstances may vary greatly, and therefore true satisfaction and confidence lies not in our material circumstances or visible accomplishments, but in our proper adjustment to them according to the expressed wisdom of God.

Though destined to live during times of national collapse and humiliation, this conviction of the passing and secondary nature of present things would provide all these men alike with a basic consolation. Truly they grieved sincerely over the unhappy state of affairs, and labored heroically to alleviate it, but they realized that behind all temporary and surface calamities the eternal purpose was moving forward, unaffected by the failures of men.

This did not, of course, relieve them from doing their part in their day and generation, but it softened the bitterness and despondency that external conditions would generate.

In their day, their heaven and earth were being shaken. Things which had appeared stable were collapsing. And with the collapse of the external things went the collapse of the faith of many.

It was a time for determining what things were passing and incidental, and what things were fixed and eternal. Those whose faith had related to temporal prosperity and safety in the land were cast adrift. Only those held firm who saw deeper, and realized that faith in God means more than merely expecting His favor and protection, and must carry through times of darkness as well as times of light.

Of such was Daniel. Beholding his people's misery, his faith was not shaken in the power of the God Who had chosen them, but he

looked to the spiritual condition of the people for the answer to their woes.

So with Jeremiah and Ezekiel. While others lamented God's departure from them, these men proclaimed the real cause, and the only remedy. We, too, live in times of upheaval—

“Once again I shake both the heaven and the earth...that those things that cannot be shaken may remain” (Heb. 12:26-27).

Whether we are shaken away or whether we remain depends upon the things to which we cling. If we cling to the things that cannot be shaken, then we can say with David—

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The Lord of Hosts is with us.

“Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea” (Psalm 46).

—*Bro. G.V.Growcott*

Armageddon—The Most Dramatic Event in World History

The word “Armageddon” is found but once in the Scripture of Truth. Rev. 16:16—

“He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

Although occurring but once, and that in the highly symbolical book of Revelation, it is evident that it signifies a great battlefield, and on many occasions it has been associated with wars and rumors of war during the past fifty years. Many times during the war of 1914-1918, it was quite common to hear the question, “Is this Armageddon?” And again in 1939-1944, the term came before the public, when similar questions were asked.

Whatever misunderstandings have arisen, we must lay them aside and turn to the Scriptures for more light on the subject.

First, we go to the book of Revelation, in which the name is only found. The sixteenth chapter of that portion of the Bible deals with the judgments of God upon the nations in the latter days. They are here represented under a symbol in which seven angels pour out upon the earth “*the seven last plagues,*” which are in turn symbolically represented by “*seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God.*”

In the 12th verse we read of the sixth angel pouring out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, “*whose waters are dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*” Students of the Bible have known for over 200 years that the Euphrates, in this verse, is a symbol of the Turkish Empire. The drying up of its waters represents the decline of the Turkish Empire—something that has now become an historical fact.

The Kings of the East are first, the Lord Jesus, who as “*King of kings, and Lord of lords*” comes to his throne in Jerusalem, and second, he will be assisted by the faithful in Christ Jesus, who by that time will have put on immortality and will go forth in power and glory to establish the Kingdom of God.

It is very plain from the 38th chapter of Ezekiel and the 16th chapter of Revelation that a crisis, or stage of development, in world affairs is to arise, in which the kings of the earth are to contend one against another for the possession of this land and for universal dominion over all the earth.

For the present, however, we will remain with the book of Revelation, or as it is better described, “The Apocalypse,” and here in the 14th verse of this 16th chapter we learn that “*the kings of the earth and of the whole habitable are to be gathered together to the war of that great day of God the Omnipotent.*”

It is well for us to observe the solemn warning that is inserted at this point—

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

The prophecy then continues as we read in verse 16. The mention of “*the Hebrew tongue*” directs us to look for the place in the land of Israel and for the meaning of the word in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the King James Version it is spelled Armageddon, which means “City of Megiddo.” In the Revised version it is spelled Harmageddon, which means “Mountain of Megiddo.”

Megiddo is a city at the foot of Mount Carmel, and it is important to note that it means “Place of Troops.” Another expression to consider is the “Valley of Megiddo” or the “Plain of Megiddo,” which is believed to be the same as the “Plain of Esdraelon,” between Carmel and the Nazareth hills—the great battlefield of nations. It was there that Barak defeated the Canaanites, and there Gideon defeated the host of the Midianites. There also Saul was slain on Mount Gilboa. There Elijah slew the prophets of Baal. There Ahaziah was slain by Jehu.

There Jezebel was eaten by dogs, and there Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-Necco. This is but a part of what has transpired in that locality, and they are the illustrations of the greater tragedies of the near future, as we shall see.

We return now to the chapter read this evening—Ezekiel 38. In reading the 2nd verse we will use the Revised Version—

“Son of Man, set thy face against Gogue, of the land of Magogue, the Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him.”

Here are two powers represented—Son of Man on one side, and Gogue on the other. It is perhaps clear to all who the Son of Man represents. As you know, this is one of the titles of Jesus, being the son of Man on his mother’s side and Son of God on his Father’s.

But who is Gogue? We are not so interested as to who he is, but what he is. The verse tells us. He is the prince, leader, or autocrat of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. And here is what we find about these people or nations. About the year 1640, the celebrated Bochart, as a result of his researches into Sacred Geography, says that Ros is the most ancient form of the name of Russia, and that Meshech denotes Moscovy, from which comes the name of Moscow. Tubal, or Tobl as it is in its ancient form, denotes Tobolski. Magogue has been determined to denote that region extending from Russia to the Rhine and would therefore comprise such territories as Wallochias, Transylvania, Hungary, and Germany. Therefore, whoever Gogue is, he is the Autocrat of all the Russians, Hungary, and Germany.

In verses 7-12, we learn that in the latter years this great northern power is to come down against the mountains of Israel. Again in verses 14-16—

“Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.”

This is not an obscure prophecy—it is but one of many. Here are others:

Zeph. 3:8—*“Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.”*

Zech. 14:2—*“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.”*

Joel 3:2—*“I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.”*

It should be noted, however, that Israel will not be left alone in an attempt to stop the invasion by the Northern Power. Another power, in Ezek. 38:13 appears—

“Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?”

Who are the Merchants of Tarshish? This has long been established as the British power and her colonies—represented by the lion and her cubs. Sheba and Dedan are both located in the Arabian peninsula where Britain is now established.

Some people doubt very much that Russia could be the power indicated in this prophecy. But let us read something from a current publication, from Jews in the News, September 1950, from an article entitled “The ‘Red’ Heel”—

“Where will it fall next: QUICK magazine (June 5th) predicts: ‘Next concentration of Soviet pressure will be on the ‘bridge’ between Africa and Asia. Countries in the news will be Iran and Afghanistan.’ This is news that pulsates the heart of the student of prophecy. When Russia will make this move maybe Joe Stalin himself does not know, but it seems to be in the offing. There has been a concentration of Soviet military might on the Iranian border for some time now. Surely the U.S.S.R. has no fear of attack from that side of its vast territory.

“This massing of armed forces has eventual aggression and conquest as its object. The Red sweep into Iran and Iraq is reasonable

to expect, for the Russian high command has set its greedy eyes upon the great oil reserve of these backward Arab countries.

“But do not the USSR and its satellite states have plenty of this greasy substance? Apparently not. Polyzoides states that the ‘main weakness of the Soviet air force is the lack of adequate fuel supplies.’ Then too, there are the warm waters of the Persian Gulf, something the Czars dreamt about and which has remained a Russian quest—a warm seaport.

“Waldo Drake points out that to seize this oil-soaked land the route Russia’s armies would follow to reach the rich Euphrates-Tigris valleys is through Azerbaijan and then over a natural flat 200-mile-wide corridor straight to the Gulf. Iran has nothing formidable, militarily speaking, to withstand the armored rolling terror from the north, but we believe that when the Red hordes start moving in that direction, they will be heading for their doom. Their conquest of Iran and Iraq could very readily prove to be a springboard to Armageddon—for they may then conceive the fatal ‘mischievous purpose’ (Ezekiel 38:10, margin).

“It is with the greatest interest that we note the detailed preparations for the climactic struggle. Russia’s hatred of the State of Israel, Zionism, and its own Jewry is growing with the passing of days. The Government of Israel really got into the doghouse with USSR when it approved the United States and UN action in Korea. Israel has tried as much as possible to be neutral in the conflict between East and West, but now she is branded as far as the Kremlin is concerned. PROPHECY MONTHLY states:

“ ‘The Soviet historical journal VOPROSY ISTORIC, published in Moscow, calls on all Soviet scientists to expose Zionism as a ‘reactionary ideology of Jewish bourgeois Nationalism.’ (Another Communist version of Zionism: ‘An absurd form of nationalist extremism, largely financed by people in the United States.’)

“ ‘The struggle against Zionism, said the article, ‘has never been cancelled and has assumed particular importance now because Zionism represents one of the most active weapons of the American-English policy in the Near East. Zionism now serves as a weapon of disruptive activity in the hands of Anglo-American warmongers in countries outside of England and the United States.’

“ ‘Such is Russia’s official attitude toward the Jews and Israel. This hardly fits with the claim of some that the Zionists are Reds dominated by Russia.’

“As evidence that Moscow has put teeth into these words, we submit this report that appeared in the Jewish press here:

“ ‘The enthusiasm of the Jews in Soviet Russia for the establishment of the State of Israel has caused much chagrin and alarm to the Kremlin, resulting in stern measures against the Jews as well as a vehement attack upon the government of the new state and Zionism at large.

“ ‘The Secret Police have liquidated all Jewish social and cultural associations in Russia and even Yiddish newspapers were liquidated over night without a word of warning or explanation. All Jews who held any responsible positions in the government were swiftly removed.

“ ‘A campaign has been launched against Jewish writers and scientists who were accused of pro-western sympathies. They were called cosmopolitan dogs without a home. Thus comes to an end the myth of the alleged absence of anti-Semitism or supposed sympathy for the Jews in Soviet Russia. The party line is laid down to all without any difference and woe betide anyone who does not adhere to it.’ “

No, there is no doubt about the part Russia is to play in these latter days. However, the British power had a very little part to play in this great struggle. Another and greater power comes upon the scene—

“And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel ... And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man’s sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezek. 38: 18-19, 21-23).

We leave this scene as it is for a short time, and look into another development that has taken place in this period of the world’s history. You will recall that in the Apocalypse just before the gathering of the nations, Jesus said, *“Behold, I come as a thief.”* That is, he comes quietly without any demonstration to begin a quiet work. *“Therefore,*

be ye ready,” said Jesus, “for in such an hour as ye think not the son of Man cometh.” It is the time of the dead, as we read in Rev. 11:18—

“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”

Who are these saints? Not those to whom the title of saint has been given by some ecclesiastical system, but Saints, according to the Scripture, are those who have separated themselves from the world and dedicated their lives to the service of God, as we read in Ps. 50:5—

“Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”

Or, as we read in 1 Cor. 1:2—

“ ... to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”

Therefore, in the time of the dead, every saint who has died since Abel will be made to stand upon his feet after being raised from the sleep of death, for says Paul in 2 Cor. 5:10—

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

Thus, in the time of the dead there will be a separation of the just, or righteous saints, from the unjust, or unrighteous saints. As Jesus said that at the end of the age, the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just. Those who remain will be the called, and chosen and faithful. They are the redeemed from the earth. These are the saints spoken of in Psalm 149:7, who are to execute vengeance upon the nations and punishments upon the people.

As to where the saints are to be gathered, we read in Hab. 3:1-6 —

“A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went

forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth; he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.”

The Hebrew word here translated ‘came’ is ‘yahvo’—the future tense of the verb and should therefore read ‘shall come in.’

Moses says he comes from Sinai, but there is no contradiction. Teman means ‘the south’ and Sinai is south from Jerusalem.

It is evident that the saints will be judged in this locality. Here, having received the gift of eternal life and made equal unto the angels, they wait for judgment to be given them in preparation for their march of victory when they will execute vengeance upon the nations.

Jesus and the saints are now ready for their victorious march against the Autocrat of all of Russia. We now go back to the scene in the land of Israel.

The northern host has come like a cloud to cover the land. The city of Jerusalem shall be taken, said Zechariah, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished and half of the city shall go forth into captivity.

The power of Britain and her Commonwealth and the United States of America are unable to stop the invader.

But why does God permit the land to be invaded? Why are the allied powers helpless? The answer is found in the chapter we read—Ezekiel 38:21-23—

“And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man’s sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord”

The time has come for Jesus and the saints to go into action. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle. He shall go forth with whirlwinds of Teman. He will march through the land in indignation. He will tread down the people in his anger and make them drunk in his fury and bring down their strength to the earth. Thus saith the Lord, I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. And they shall know that I am the Lord.

But there is more to be done, and so we look briefly at the 39th chapter of Ezekiel, verses 1-7 and 17-22—

“Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel: and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel ... And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God. And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward.”

The feet of Jesus are now set Zionward, as he and the saints take up their march to the Mount of Olives, as we learn from Zechariah 14:4-5—

“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of

Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.”

From here he sends his heralds to the city of the great king. The communication that follows is recorded in Psalm 24:7-10—

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.”

“Who is the King of glory?”

“The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.”

“Who is this King of glory?”

“The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.”

The multitude then descends from Olivet and enter the gates of Zion amid the rejoicing of the saints—Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

As he enters the city, he is approached and asked a question as we read in Zech. 13:6—

“What are these wounds in thine hands?”

Thus after an absence of over 1900 years, Jesus proves his identity to this subjects, as he did to the apostle Thomas in the first century. Then after the type of Joseph in Egypt, he makes himself known to his brethren, as Zechariah informs us in 12:10-11—

“I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Mediggon.”

—and further in 14:8-9—

“It shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one.”

Zephaniah also speaks of this time in 3:14-17—

“Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”

But Israel is not alone in rejoicing for the Psalmist informs us in Psa. 72:17 that *“His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.”*

Isaiah informs us in 2:2-4—

“It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Thus shall the song of the angels at the birth of Jesus be fulfilled. Peace on earth and good will among men.

—Bro. George A. Gibson

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 44

“IF thy brother shall trespass against thee.” A serious sin is implied, as already shown. Let us not forget that until this degree of perverseness is reached our duty is confined to exhortation and education, either by friendly chat, correspondence, or any way that may suggest itself to us as skilful, faithful servants of Christ. Again, Christ’s law is not for application in the case of one who has sinned, however dreadfully, if that sin is acknowledged and repented of. A brother may sin against another in manifold ways: by slandering, maligning, defrauding, tryannising, brutally illtreating. But, as previously pointed out, Christ’s law extends also to any and every sin which the scriptures tell us will exclude from eternal life—sins not to be countenanced, and

necessitating withdrawal from the habitual practisers of them. We shall have more to say upon these sins later on. For the present it will suffice to note that the sin or trespass that Christ alludes to is a palpable, obvious, fatal sin. When doubt exists on this point, let us not apply Matt. 18:15–17. “Some men’s sins are open beforehand”. Some are not, and therefore, we have to wait for later circumstances, or Christ’s infallible judgment, to disclose them.

“Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.” To give the go-by to a sinning brother, or to shut our eyes to his offence, may be more agreeable to our feelings than to approach him quietly, gently, and deliberately on the matter. But our duty is clear and it is imperative. To go soon and alone is Christ’s will (an arrangement rooted in the law, Lev. 19:17; Prov. 24:11, 12, R.V.)—no prior proclamation of the sin to others; no public denunciation and abuse. The advantages of obedience to Christ’s instructions are very many. The brother is far more likely to listen to our correction and counsel if he is aware that his sins is not everywhere known. In the event, too, of our having laid an insufficiently or wrongly grounded charge, a little talk is almost certain to set matters straight. The going alone tends also to circumscribe and minimise the evil. To blaze abroad a brother’s crime is to excite propensities which should be crucified, and is also a sure way of bringing the truth and associations into bad repute. A brother, if falsely accused, should not, unless prompted by a wise and righteous reason, refuse an interview, but rather encourage it. A righteous man should never allow dignity nor outraged feeling to hinder or stand in the way of possible concord. “Follow after the things which make peace.”

“If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” This brings out the predominating object of Christ’s institution—the reclamation of a brother from a sin, which, if unrepented of, would damn him in the day of judgment. Our approach should be in the spirit of humility—(Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25), brotherly kindness (2 Thes. 3:14), and forgiveness (Col. 3:13). There must be no demanding apologies; no exacting reparation; no punishing; but an honest and unqualified effort to restore the erring. If we should have been injured, sorely injured, by the trespass, then doubly careful should we be lest our incentive be wrath and not love. An enraged or heated brother should cool down before moving. Let such an one test himself by the mind of Christ (Father, forgive them”); of Stephen (“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”); of Paul (“I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge”). If we obtain from our brother an admission of the sin, and a declaration of intention to reform, his word should be taken as satisfactory, and the affair should be completely dropped, in harmony with the words of Christ, “If

ye from your hearts forgive not,” etc. There must be no “stools of repentance” in the arrangements of the true disciples of Christ. If our brother fall again and again into sin, our forgiveness is to be unlimited, “until seventy times seven.”

“If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more.” These witnesses are provided to bear testimony in the event of the case having to come before the ecclesia. In selecting these witnesses, let us, whenever practicable, choose men against whom the trespasser has no especial prejudice. This is a concession that love and wisdom will be quick to make. Upon these witnesses will devolve sacred obligations. Faithfully, impartially must they first investigate the bearings of the charge, and refuse to aid and abet it if it be vexatious, ill-founded, or not sufficiently grave for the application of Matt. 18. Also in pursuing their duties, let them aim at restoring the transgressor, not driving him farther away; at covering up his sin, not exposing it (James 5:19, 20). All this will involve anxiety and trouble, but let them think of Christ and his solicitude—even to death—for the ungodly. There is an opportunity for us in this matter to co-operate with Christ in the work of the salvation of sinners.

“If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church”—the ecclesia. The object is two-fold. First, that the church may follow up the influence of the others for restoration. Secondly, that the sinner, if still unrepentant, may be openly withdrawn from that unity, and purity may prevail. Cutting off, or withdrawing from a brother, is a very grave business. Forbear long before doing it. The Apocalyptic letters to the seven churches show us that Christ is slow to cast off. The ecclesia should be painstaking to a last degree in its efforts to restore the offender. Hastiness in this matter is very wrong. Christ has laid down no time by which the three-fold proceedings are to be bounded, therefore let our action be governed by becoming tardiness and deliberation. Let the members of the ecclesia see what they can individually do. The offender should, if possible, be induced to attend the meeting at which his case is to be considered. Those who speak thereat should do so with kindness, not offensively nor officiously. The brethren should also consider his case impartially, and not vote in a sheep-like manner. If the offender is absent from this meeting, then let a brotherly message be sent to him before his name is erased. Kindness is more potent than unkindness, besides, unkindness is altogether out of place in any mortal who may himself fall at any time.

“If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” Christ’s arrangement when pursued to the bitter end means not merely the standing apart from a brother, but the placing

of that brother in a position, so far as our actions and convictions go, of a man without hope. If our procedure is, stage by stage, faithfully carried out, we may rest assured that Christ will ultimately confirm it to the exclusion of the unrepentant and from eternal life. Would Christ overlook an offence in a case when he has told us not to? In this connection Christ's words in Matt. 18:18 are very significant—"Whatsoever he shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," etc. It is, of course, presumed that the binding is according to divine directions. This shows us that obedience to Christ must be the sole prompter of our action in the matter. It must be obedience to him which urges us to sound the three-fold warning in our brother's ears. If a sin is flagrant and maintained, our own feelings are not to be considered. Christ is our Master in the case, and he must be obeyed, even if we have to say "Good-bye" to our best and dearest friend.

—*Bro. A.T. Jannaway—1895*

A Christadelphian on the Land of Israel

Sixth Visit to the Holy Land

It is an inspiration to watch the faces of pilgrims beholding Jaffa for the first time—it revives our first impressions, now nearly a quarter of a century ago. The view, however, is not now what it was then. In those days Jaffa made an ideal snap-shot from a ship anchored a little distance away—but the founding and building of the now well-known suburb of Tel Aviv, gives a very straggly picture if all is got into the photograph, and a cut off or incomplete view if confined to Jaffa front. Not only so; there have been so many new buildings erected in Jaffa itself, and so utterly out of keeping with the other and ancient landmarks that the view in the opinion of the writer, has been quite spoiled.

The religious elements of the party are more concerned about seeing the reputed "House of Simon the Tanner", than they are in facts concerning the Signs of the Times—evidences that it won't be long now before the Messiah of Israel puts in an appearance, and causes the law to go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Such substitutes for the real thing do not appeal to those who love the stones of Jerusalem, any more than do substitutes for Christianity. As most guide books tell us, landing at Jaffa is generally rather unpleasant, and very often dangerous, as the little boats, which convey one from the ship to the landing stage, rock unpleasantly at the companion way by the side of the vessel. There are awkward waves to encounter as the oarsmen pull through the seen and unseen rocks before the passengers

set foot on terra firma. But, “all’s well that ends well”, as we again thought on finding ourselves ashore.

Jaffa has apparently more than righted herself since the end of the Great War of 1914-18, notwithstanding the diversion of much passenger and other traffic through the opening of the Cairo-Ludd-Jerusalem Railway.

The uprise of Tel Aviv has meant much for Jaffa. Think of it—a barren dune of sand, without inhabitants, in less than fifteen years transformed into an evergrowing town with a population of 30,000, and that, entirely Jewish! Nearly 300 businesses, over 100 doctors and dentists, more than 200 teachers. It also contains over 2,000 solid houses, and hundreds of temporary dwellings. Readers of the Berean Christadelphian are kept well informed concerning Zionist work in Palestine so we need not say more here on the doings at Tel Aviv. The transport from Jaffa to Jerusalem by rail still leaves much to be desired; so, rather than wait for the “next train”, Mr. Tadross, our agent, decided on motoring the journey, and before very long, we were going up to Jerusalem at the average rate of 15 miles per hour. What a contrast to the “good old days” as some people say. Within our experience such a journey meant a night’s lodging half way, and as a matter of choice, and in order to see and know the land, to our mind, hordes and tents far surpass either motor or train. As this recital is only intended to be a kind of diary, and not a tourist’s guide, we must refer our readers to our *A Bible Student in Bible Lands* for useful details. (This book is now being printed, and we expect shortly to see it published at 4/- by the Maranatha Press). En route and amid orange, lemon, pomegranate, and other fruit gardens as well as cypress and sycamore trees, we had again pointed out to us the ‘reputed Tomb of Dorcas. Then we enjoyed the sight of the Plain of Sharon, which extends from Jaffa to Caesarea and from the central hills to the Mediterranean. The very word Sharon conjures up in one’s mind when it and Lebanon “shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God”, and when “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad” (Isaiah 35:1- 2). The next place of note we remember, was Beth Dejan; doubtless one of the many houses of Dagon, the god of the Philistines (Joshua 15:41); beth meaning house. A little farther on, we reached a place better known to British Soldiers than to Bible Students—each B.S. but with a difference.

Surafend, in the last year or so of the Great War, was literally filled with things military—aeroplanes, observation balloons, tanks, guns, ammunition, and soldiers; and they are not yet all cleared away. Continuing our journey, we broke it for a while at Ramleh to have a look around and take a photograph or two. Ramleh, it is said, is the

Arimathea of the New Testament (Matthew 27: 57). We were informed that where the Latin Convent now stands is where the house of “Joseph of Arimathea” once stood. Delightful district this. Leaving Ramleh, we are, as it were, in touch with Ekron, where there now exists one of the many Jewish Colonies that have sprung up since the old “dry bones” began to shake. The places about here, in former times were very important to the Philistines (1 Samuel 5 & 6). We think of the captured ark which proved worse than a “white elephant” to the Dagon worshippers; and we think of the ark in the cart drawn by those two cows which, although bereaved of their calves, “took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left” (1 Samuel 6: 12).

By the way, I cannot forget a little incident that really happened “by the way”. It was at a place called Bab el Wady, which means “gate of the valley”, because, in coming the reverse direction to the one we are taking, it is where the travellers leave the mountains of Judea and enter the valley or plain. On this particular 14th day of July, the heat was simply over-powering, and to add to the discomfort, there had been no rain for months, everything was parched, and the dust raised by the motors was appalling. That we were thirsty goes without saying; our clothes which were literally impregnated with dust were an outward and visible sign of the inward and invisible thirst. Seeing native refreshment was to be obtained at the Khan or Inn, I mounted the stone stairway, got sufficient for “both of us”, I carefully carried it down to “her” who was seated in the car, and requested her to satisfy her thirst, having done so, and seeing a fellow-traveller looking on longingly—a middle-aged Scotch schoolmistress—offered her a sip, there was no end to that sip so long as anything remained in the glass. There was no time to buy any more. I shall have my sip first when we again visit the half-way house to Jerusalem! How some things do live in one’s memory!

Resuming our journey we ascended the first hill, where the need of water made itself very much in evidence: “not a blade of grass nor a leaf of tree to be seen, a wild region, such as you might look for in Iceland; so desolate that one instinctively buttons up the coat as if it ought to be cold; so desolate that one feels for weapons of defence, although not a sign of life is in view”. And July too!

Reaching the top of this first mountain of Judea, we had a beautiful view of Ramleh, the Plain of Sharon, Jaffa and the Mediterranean. A fairly good road and a motor mean progress; and although it was hill after hill, we very soon realized we were getting near the Holy City that

is to be, for we recognized all the old familiar buildings and landmarks. Now we reach the summit, 2,600 feet above the sea level, and passing the Mozah and Meah Shearim Jewish Settlements, and Old Olivet House, we pass through the Jaffa Gate, and call a halt at the Grand New Hotel. Why call it either Grand or New, passes my understanding, and always did. We say always, because we have known it for a quarter of a century, and it is the same now as then. For home comforts we should have put up at “Olivet House”, for the fourth time, but we had no choice, only being in Jerusalem for 6 or 7 days. We were given “the best room in the hotel”—“the only one with private bath room attached”—and “hot and cold water supply”! But on turning on the taps we found there was “nothing doing” and hereby hangs a sorrowful tale. The God of Israel has withheld rain. The Pools of Solomon—the Upper Middle and Lower—with their possible supply of over 50,000,000 gallons of spring water, have all but run dry: the two Upper ones empty and very little in the lowest, only sufficient to provide an altogether insufficient intermittent supply; and it is mainly from the Pools of Solomon that the British have relied upon for providing free water to the Holy City.

But how about the hundreds of cisterns in which the people have hitherto stored the early and the latter rains? The fact is, they are mostly empty. The British Government undertook to fill all such with the spring water provided the cisterns were cleaned out, made sanitary, and a Government certificate obtained that all was satisfactory. Most of such cisterns, especially the huge underground ones, are in course of repair, and consequently without water of any kind. Even at the Grand New Hotel drinking water at the dinner table was rationed out, and we considered ourselves well served with half or three parts of a small glass—and even that was chlorated!

Never, in the whole of my life, have I so feelingly realized what a terrible punishment is in store for those people who refuse to go up to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles—“Even upon them shall be no rain” (Zechariah 14: 16). But there is still more to be said on that matter, of a really startling character.

—*Bro. F. G. Jannaway*

Drinking

THERE is no doubt that habitual use of spirituous liquors is as much to be avoided as the use of tobacco, and for the same reason: that the habitual use is evil in itself as regards its effects on those

mental faculties which are the very soil for the fructification of the Good Seed; and because it is associated in the world with every evil and every disreputable thing.

The maxims of godliness teach us to *'abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good,'* and to be identified only with that which is *'of good report'* (Romans 12:9; Ph.4:8). On this ground alone we should abstain.

There is, of course, a possibility of exalting the drink question or the tobacco question to the position of a crotchet, as the teetotallers and anti-tobacconists do; but it is not wise to go to the other extreme, and ignore all the discriminations of propriety and purity in the behavior of those professing Christ.

The house of Christ stands under a very broad injunction to carefulness, that extends even to eating and drinking (1 Cor. 10:31; Phil.2:15)—

"Whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God ... walking without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation."

We are at liberty from Mosaic distinctions, but we are not at liberty to use this liberty as an occasion to serve the flesh, or set propriety at defiance (Gal. 5:13). By love we are to serve one another, and to consider the bearing our actions may have upon the lives of others. In everything we are to *'walk as becometh saints' 'in all holiness and godly behavior,'* prepared if necessary, like Paul, to—

"Neither eat flesh nor drink wine, nor do anything whereby another should be stumbled or made weak" (Rom. 14:21).

—or to cut off the right hand, as Christ recommends, if it offend.

The world at large knows no such restrictions, but gives unbridled reign to its desires as they arise. But we are not of the world, and part of our non-worldliness (speaking of such as *really* belong to Christ) consists in the refusal of *'all ungodliness and worldly lusts'* which Paul commands, and in that *'sober, righteous and godly'* life in the midst of an evil world which he enjoins (Tit. 2:12), and which will at last receive Christ's approbation.

It is no answer to say that Christ was charged with being a *'wine-bibber.'* The charge was not true. It was of the same order as the charge that he was Beelzebub. He partook of wine occasionally, doubtless, on proper occasions, and with righteous

moderation. His turning water into wine at Cana was to show his power. And the wine he made was for human happiness, and not to supply a public and demoralizing machinery of inebriation. We cannot legitimately deduce from this a sanction to habits, liquors and institutions which, in our day, have aroused the well-disposed of even an unjustified community into organized and successful movement for its legislative suppression.

As for Paul's prescription of '*a little wine*' to Timothy, it only shows that wine of the right sort is good *as a medicine*, at the right time, and in the proper small and occasional quantities. No argument can be logically founded on it of habitual liquoring, which enfeebles the whole mental and physical machinery, and which is inconsistent with the whole current and character of the godliness prescribed for saints passing through a defiled and godless world, on their way to a Kingdom wherein '*there shall not enter anything that defileth.*' —*The Christadelphian, 1893*

The Daily Readings

The influence of the Scriptures upon our minds as we read them daily tends to give us the power to discriminate; they give us the sound mind of which the apostle Paul speaks, which enables us to see when a certain principle applies and when another principle applies. It gives us the power to discern between good and evil. We have our senses exercised by reason of use, in regard to spiritual things.

—*The Christadelphian 1923*

Withdrawal

It is important if withdrawal must take place in any case, that the process should be done correctly as to form, otherwise a root of bitterness is left in the ground that will sprout trouble afterward. No one withdrawn from should have it in his power to prove the ecclesia to be wrong in the way the thing was done.

Diary of a Second Voyage Bro. Roberts— 1898

Christ's Example

It is a remarkable feature of the temptation of Christ that he employed the Scriptures in repelling the suggestions of the tempter. This is a feature worth noting in a day like ours, when the universal

tendency is to give the Scriptures a less and less commanding place. With Christ, the fact of a thing being "written" was a sufficient reason for making it a rule of conduct, which is becoming less and less the case in a day when more and more the theory finds favour that the Scriptures are partly or wholly the product of human thought, and subject to human judgment and conscience as to the obligation of its precepts. The implication is obvious that we only stand with Christ fully when we recognise that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and therefore as he said, "cannot be broken" in its truth or authority.

—*Bro. Robert Roberts—1886*

Kingdom: Earth or Heaven? Does It Matter?

QUESTION: "The numerous passages of Scripture brought forward in Christendom Astray to prove that Christ will reign personally in Jerusalem are (or seem to be) so clear and emphatic as to admit of no doubt whatever, and at times I feel that I could exclaim to the book, 'Almost thou persuadest me.'

"But what must I think of Matthew 12:26?—'*If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how shall then his KINGDOM stand?*'

"If a state of sin constitutes the Kingdom of Satan., why should not a state of righteousness constitute the Kingdom of God? Evidently the words have a spiritual meaning, for Satan has no visible kingdom.

"Again, in John 14:2-6, if Christ has gone to prepare a mansion for believers in his Father's house, is it not natural to infer that it must be in heaven? Especially when we well consider the words—

"*And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself.*'

"It appears to me that the only way in which a visitor can 'receive' the visited must be by returning with the latter to his own abode. If Christ comes to establish a Kingdom on the earth, it will be the believers who will receive him.

"*That where I am there ye may be also.*'

"But WHERE? If Christ alluded to Palestine, would he not have spoken in a less mysterious manner? Christ said—

"*No man cometh unto the Father but by me.*'

“While reading these words, one naturally asks—How can a man COME to the Father (God) unless he goes to heaven (His dwelling place)? And the same idea presents itself while reading—

“*The pure in heart shall see God.*’

“In view of Christ’s Kingdom being established on earth, does it not appear strange that he made no plain allusions to his future reign at Jerusalem although his second coming was expected very soon? (See Mt. 10:23, 16:28, 24:34; Mk. 9:1, Lk. 9:27, 19:11; 1 Th. 4:15. 5:23.)

“The words of Christ point to the immediate future, and the early Christians—under the delusion that Christ would appear in their time—very naturally (I think) dwell most earnestly upon that event and exhorted men to repent and be always ready.

“Generation after generation has passed away and yet Christ has not come, and our present teachers, in doubt as regards the time of his appearing, have (and I think with equal consistency) exhorted men to repent and prepare for death.

“The fact seems to be that both the early and latter Christian teachers have done their best to warn and prepare mankind for what they supposed would be the first event. Surely if we are prepared to meet Christ we are also prepared to die, and if prepared for death we are likewise prepared to meet Christ should he appear in our own time.

“It is certainly very desirable to obtain from the Scriptures clear views as regards the future habitation of the righteous, but I cannot quite see that it should be a matter of vital importance to Christians as to whether their happy eternity is spent on earth or in heaven. Whether they reign with Christ on earth or in heaven we know they will be ever with the Lord.

“It is, I think, worthy of note that the apostles’ whole time was occupied in teaching men holiness and purity of life, showing rather a scorn (certainly a great disregard) for power, pomp, and riches, instead of looking forward to a time when they should become princes over the nations.”

ANSWER: The foregoing suggestions are stated with a temperateness and a candor that call for respect and consideration.

That they are all based upon some degree of misapprehension it will not be difficult to show. We cannot better do this than by taking them in their order.

First of all, the admission that the evidence in proof of Christ’s personal reign in Jerusalem seems “so clear and emphatic as to admit of

no doubt whatever,” establishes a presumption that any casual appearance in a contrary direction that may be met with in such Scriptures as have been referred to, must be capable of explanation with that doctrine.

That it is so becomes apparent in every case, while any endeavor to adjust the matter the contrary way—that is, to dispose of the evidence of Christ’s personal reign in harmony with the idea that it will not take place—will be found a necessary failure.

* * *

THE first question is,

“If a state of sin constitutes the Kingdom of Satan, why should not a state of righteousness constitute the Kingdom of God?”

The first answer is that a “state of sin” does **not** constitute the Kingdom of Satan referred to in the words of Christ. There are different kinds of Satanism, and we must always discriminate before founding an argument on any particular one.

Christ was arguing with the Pharisees on their OWN suggestion that his performance of miracles was due to the power of “*Beelzebub, the prince of the demons*” (see context).

The Satan in the case was this “Beelzebub.” Now we know that this Beelzebub was a fiction—not a “state of sin,” but an **imaginary deity**. Christ assumed his reality merely for the purposes of argument, as men commonly do concerning the myths of their opponents—

“*IF I by Beelzebub, cast out demons, etc...*”

“His kingdom,” therefore, was the imaginary jurisdiction maintained by Beelzebub over an imaginary host of demons. Consequently, the basis of the question is gone.

The question itself, “Why should not a state of righteousness constitute the Kingdom of God?” is at once met by the fact that such a “state” is NOT a “kingdom.”

A kingdom may be “righteousness” in the sense in which the late Emperor Napoleon said the empire was “peace”; but righteousness cannot be a kingdom, which is **the enforced power of a king in a populated territory**.

That THIS is the nature of the Kingdom to be established by the God of heaven is manifest from the evidence marshalled in Christendom Astray.

NEXT is the statement that Christ has gone to “*prepare a place*” for believers. On this the suggestion is that as Christ has gone to heaven, it is natural to “infer” that the prepared place must be in heaven.

The real question is, What did Christ mean? In considering this, we must remember what Christ said in this very same discourse:

“These things I have spoken to you in parables.”

“*My Father’s house,*” and “*preparing a place*” are parts of the parable, the meaning of which we must seek in the literal facts of the case. What are these? They are—

That Christ was about to die as the appointed bearer of the sins of the world; and was then to depart to the Father’s presence to act as “priest over the house of God;” and was then to return to “sit on the throne of his glory,” which he should share with his ransomed brethren.

The whole of these acts constitute a preparing of the appointed place (in glory) for the disciples. The parable is in harmony with the facts of the case as discernible in the covenants made with the fathers, and the “*great and precious promises*” so numerous promulgated in the prophets.

But if we “infer” that Christ will take his people away from the earth to the Father’s dwelling place, we destroy what is revealed in the Scriptures of Moses and the prophets, and of the apostles too, and throw the whole Scripture into confusion. This is a disproof of the correctness of the interpretation suggested.

“But (says our friend), consider the words”—

“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and RECEIVE you unto myself.”

“Will not Christ, the visitor, return with his people, the visited, to his OWN abode. If not, it is his people that will receive him, and not he his people.”

Yes, dear friend, if we are to ignore the whole body of plain teaching concerning the work and mission of Christ. We cannot do this. We must look all around the subject and take all parts of it into account.

Doing this, we see the necessity for Christ coming again for the work of reception, because the work is a work affecting the **EARTH**

(Christ's property—Ps. 2:8) for his people, whom he is to cause to inherit it (Matt. 5:5).

If it was a question of taking his people to a prepared place in heaven, there would be no need for his coming again. It would be sufficient for him to take them away in the manner of Elijah.

The very fact of his “coming again” points to the locality of the reception.

He comes to receive them where he will be when he comes—that is, on the earth.

“But (says our friend) that would be Christ's people receiving Christ.”

Nay, dear friend. When Christ arrives, the bulk of his people are in the grave. If he did not act as the receiver, there would be no reception.

Present on the earth, at his return, in power and great glory, he then recalls his people from the dead, asks them to his presence, and “*receives them to himself,*” to share his life and joy, kingdom and power, forever.

That he “alluded to Palestine” is certain from the fact that he is co-heir thereof with Abraham under the promise thereof (Gal. 3:16; Heb. 11:8) and from his own allusions on other occasions, such as where he said—

“Many shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south ... “

—these expressions point to a convergent assembly on the earth; for they are terms of local application only—

“...and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets ... “

—where?—

“... in the kingdom of God”

Where is this?

“The kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem” (Mic. 4:8).

Therefore, “*In that day* (when tears are dried—Isa. 25:8) *shall this song be sung in the land of Judah*” (Is. 25:1)—the very land where the Lord was born according to the same prophetic terms (Matt. 2:5, 6).

* * *

AS to the words, “*No man cometh unto the Father but by me,*” a full acquaintance with the apostolic writings will show our friend that the “*coming*” in this case is not in a mechanical but in a moral sense—in the sense of approach for worship and acceptance, as when Paul says—

“*He that **cometh** to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*” (Heb. 11:6).

This is a case of “coming” on the part of men **on the earth**. It is the sense of those other words of Christ—

“*Him that **cometh** unto me, I will in no wise cast out.*”

And, again (Rev. 22:17)—

“*The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come.*”

“*And let him that is athirst, come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.*”

It cannot mean a going to God’s glorious dwelling-place; for, concerning that, Jesus says:

“*Whither I go, ye cannot come*” (John 13:33).

And again we read (John 3:13)—“*No man hath ascended into heaven.*”

“*God dwelleth in light that no man can approach unto*” (1 Tim. 6:16).

* * *

Again our friend asks—

“Does it not appear strange that Jesus made no plain allusions to his future reign at Jerusalem?”

The answer is that Jesus did make plain allusions of this sort. Such is his statement—

“*Ye (Jerusalem) shall not see me henceforth UNTIL the time comes when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*” (Luke 13:35).

Such also the declaration—

“*When the son of man SHALL COME in his glory and all his holy angels with him, THEN shall he sit **on the throne of his glory***” (Matt. 25:31).

Where is this?—

“The Lord of hosts shall reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem” (Is. 24:23).

“At that time shall Jerusalem be called the throne of the Lord” (Jer. 3:17).

Again he speaks of Jerusalem as *“the city of the great King”* (Mt. 5:35), and *“because he was nigh to Jerusalem”* on a certain occasion (Lk. 19:11), he spoke a parable to intimate that the Kingdom was not near **then**, (though the disciples thought so) because he must—

“Depart to a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return” (v.12).

What then?—

“I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:29).

Finally, had Christ made no allusions at all of that character, it would not have been strange, in view of the fact that the whole subject was **understood and taken for granted on all hands** in the same way that public men, living in England in full loyalty to the British throne, may deliver, and do deliver, many addresses without the slightest allusion to the fact

* * *

THE remarks as to men being ready for death being ready to meet Christ, are unexceptionable; but they in no way bear against the truth that it is at *“Christ’s appearing and kingdom”* that the dead are judged with reference to the solemn question of their final position in relation to him.

No doubt that much of the apostles’ time was “occupied in teaching men holiness and purity of life,” without which *“no man shall see the Lord,”* or have anything to do with his Kingdom. This is the model for all modern imitations of apostolic work.

But we must not allow this fact to displace the other fact that they preached the Gospel of the Kingdom as the **FIRST ITEM** in the Faith that justifies through Christ.

We must understand the apostolic doctrine of the Kingdom first before we can rightly apply their doctrine of holiness as the qualification for it.

THE apostolic “disregard for power, pomp, and riches” had reference to the present evil world only. It did not, and could not, mean that they had no regard for the promise of Christ to give them (Rev. 2:26):

“Power over the nations.”

And for the assurance of the apostles that—

“If we suffer with him, we shall reign” (2 Tim. 2:12).

Knowing that—

“The saints shall judge the world” (1 Cor. 6:2).

And that a tried faith will—

“Be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:7).

—Bro. Robert Roberts—1889

A Cloke of Covetousness

The Apostle Paul uses this phrase in 1 Thess. 2:5. In the original it is *prophasis pleonexias*. He employs this form of speech in reminding the saints of the circumstances attendant upon his first appearance among them “in speaking unto them the Gospel of God.” He tells them that in that speaking there was no deceit, uncleanness, guile, man-pleasing use of flattering words, nor *prophasis* of *pleonexia*. The first of these is rendered *cloke* in the Common Version, and signifies strictly *that which appears*; and so *that which is alleged to cover the real state of the case, an apparent cause*. Thus, if Paul had gone to Philippi pretending that, from pure affection for their “precious immortal souls,” he had visited them to invite them to God’s Kingdom and glory”; when his real object was to “establish a Church” which should pay him a stipend of two thousand dollars per annum, with donation perquisites and marriage and funeral fees—such pretence would have been a *prophasis* or “cloke” of *pleonexia*. But, on the contrary, for him to go to Philippi in obedience to the command of the Spirit, or in consequence of a cry from thence, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!”—and to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom there in the face of much contention and opposition; and for him to succeed in gathering together a company of obedient believers rejoicing in the Truth; if, on effecting this, they, in the richness of their liberality, presented him, with two thousand dollars, bidding him good speed, and

go elsewhere and labour there as he had with them, Paul might lawfully have accepted it; and have left them still more deeply indebted to him than they could pay. Although Paul might reasonably have expected before he went, that if the glorious truth he was able to impart to them were received in the love of it, such distinguished liberality would result; nevertheless, his going being consequent on being sent, or on being invited to help them, and without any previous stipulation, his speaking the Gospel would not have been “a cloke of covetousness.” Some envious, or narrow-minded souls, would seem to have insinuated this against him; for he calls God to witness, which is a solemn appeal, implying that he did not appear among them for what he could make of them through false pretences, whatever evil speakers might affirm: “We speak,” says he, “not as pleasing men, but God who trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness; nor of man sought we glory; neither of you nor of others, *when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ.*” Excepting these words in *italics*, we can also appeal to God’s testimony that from the day circumstances forced us uninvitingly into public speaking even to this present, we have spoken the truth as we came to know it, upon the principles set forth in 1 Thess. ii. 3-6, and always intend so to do, stipulating and asking for nothing; but leaving it to the spontaneous liberality of believers and their appreciation of our endeavours to determine what recompense, if any, it would be their privilege to communicate. This method our friends well know, is the rule of our proceeding. We glory in it as a free and independent proclamation “of the perfect law of liberty”; and so affording scope for a generous and *unconstrained* contribution according to the ability of those whom the Truth has freed. This is the divine method of supporting those who preached the Gospel, whether they were Apostles or “faithful men who were able to teach others,” it ensured “cheerful givers,” though it could not exclude envy and evil-speaking.

As to *pleonexia*, the word used by Paul in the text before us, and rendered *covetous* in the Common Version, the primary import of it is, “*some good which one possesses more than another.*” There is nothing criminal in one man *having more* of some good than another. The law, however, forbids a man *desiring to have* anything belonging to his neighbour; yet this did not interdict *buying*, which is based on a desiring to have; for men only buy what they want. *Desiring to have what was forbidden* was the original sin in its conception. Moses says that the fruit of the tree of knowledge was a *desire* to the eyes; and the tree itself “a tree to be *desired.*” But these desirable things were

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interdicted; and, therefore, the sin of desiring to have them. Had they not been forbidden, there would have been no sin in desiring to have them. Had they not been forbidden, there would have been no sin in longing for them, and taking of them; for Paul says: “I had not known sin if the law had not said, Thou shalt not covet.”

The radical import of *covet*, in the Scriptural use of the term, is *to desire to have unlawfully*; hence, to lust after anything. Hence, also, “all uncleanness” is styled by Paul “covetousness” in Eph. 5:3, as “fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints.” If a man, therefore, lust after another man’s wife, and have criminal conversation with her, he is both an adulterer and a covetous man, though he might scatter his gold and silver like chaff in the interests of flesh and blood. Hence, covetousness is not confined to finance, but embraces the whole range of human lusts—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; which are all fatal to our future life when gratified contrary to the divine law.

But Paul also says that “*covetousness is idolatry*.” Idolatry is the worship of idols, whether they be idols of the affections or the idols of the mind. Any lust by which a man is enslaved is the idol of the man. He worships it, and whatever the lust prompts him to, that he desires to obtain at all risks, hazards, or consequences. Hence, an inordinate desire of gain, inordinate lust, are also significations of the word; and hence, also, by implication, he is styled *pleonektes*, or a covetous man, “who *defrauds* for the sake of gain; and is *inordinately devoted* to carnal lusts. A desire of gain, in accordance with what is lawful and right is not covetousness; and is nowhere forbidden in the Word. If it were covetousness, then there is not a trader, mechanic, or labourer extant, but is a covetous man, and therefore an idolater; for they all desire gain by the practice of their crafts. The supposition is absurd, and none but a simpleton, or worse, would affirm it. To those, then, who have ignorantly, and necessarily therefore presumptuously, charged us with covetousness in making gain by publishing works which unfold to mankind “the knowledge of God,” to such we say that what we make we gain by the dissemination of Heaven’s Truth, for the eternal well-being of our contemporaries who may believe, while what ye make ye gain by exhausting your energies the live-long day, in ministering to the whims, luxuries, wants, and necessities of the Old Man of the Flesh, which all perish in the using. Ye live by the evil, we by the good that is in the world. Amen!

Hints For Bible Markers

The commands for this month are very explicit and interesting because they are concerning a disobedient brother. Many times we hear brethren exclaim, "we are not to judge" and Christ said "judge not." Yet many of the commands of Christ, especially these, require judgment. Paul gives us an indication of what Christ meant when he said judge not when he wrote to the Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 4:3-4 "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. (4) For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." We are not to judge who are worthy or unworthy of eternal life. It is not our place to judge the motive behind another's sin and condemn him for committing it. We all fail. Our best efforts fall far short of the perfection of Christ. We are admonished to treat all men with kindness and love. Jesus said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." James calls it "the royal law." We are however, to judge whom we will extend our fellowship. We are not to shut our eyes to wrongdoing or error. We are to decide where fellowship should be given and where it ought to be withheld. We are to come out of the world, we are to separate from the apostasy, and withdraw from wicked persons. These things require judgment. Christ while teaching in the temple gave this command concerning judging, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7:24)

The Apostles predicted that dissent and separation would arise and create confusion and delusion. (2 Pet. 2:1-3; Acts 20:30; 1 Cor. 11:19; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-13; Jude 19.) These things happened in their day. (Titus 1:10-16; Rom. 16:17; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-6.) Shall we expect anything different than ours? Hence the command to avoid those causing divisions.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God...If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Gods speed: (2 John 1:9-10) bro. Beryl Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

XI. CONCERNING DISOBEDIENT BRETHREN

If any man obey not the apostolic commands, the brethren to have no company with him.

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. (2 Thessalonians 3:14)

To avoid those causing divisions.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (Romans 16:17)

To withdraw from everyone walking disorderly, or not in accordance with apostolic precept.

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. (2 Thessalonians 3:6)

To put away wicked persons.

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. (1 Cor. 5:11)

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