

## **VIEW FROM THE TOWER.**

Accounts of the widespread and destructive floods of this past month, with their accompanying distress, have ere this reached you through the daily press. Such like events as floods, fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, pestilences, cyclones, etc., have always elicited much comment both from press and pulpit regarding their cause. The most commonly attributed cause is, that God has sent the calamity as a special punishment for supposed greater wickedness of the people of the suffering districts, and as a warning to others.

Another and growing view is that it just happened so from natural causes; and that, if there is a God, he either cannot help such things, or does not care to do so.

For our part, we cannot endorse either of these views. We quote from the daily press notices of some of the sermons preached in this city. The editor's comments we consider good:

### **"THE FLOOD IN THE PULPITS.**

"The flood, which lapped the doorsteps of a number of churches last week, overflowed into several of the pulpits yesterday. Quite a number of preachers found texts for their sermons in different phases of the disaster. The lessons they drew from it were various. Rev. Mr. Eaton rejoiced that the worst is past without involving us in total destruction; pictured man's impotence to combat the pitiless force of natural elements, and drew a parallel with the floods of temptation which threaten all of us and overwhelm many. Rev. Mr. Prugh dwelt upon it as a proclamation of God's personal presence and power. Rev. Mr. Sands, while giving due recognition to the potency of a heavy rain, combined with the sudden thawing of a deep snow, as flood-creating factors

in their way, maintained that God was back of it all, with a purpose of his own in the calamity. The exact design of Providence he did not presume to fathom. Rev. Mr. McCrory took altogether a sterner view of it. He saw in it a visitation of Divine wrath for our multiplied sins, and called upon us to take comfort in the thought that we have not been given nearly the chastisement we deserve.

"There is no question but this last will be the most popular view of it – in the hill wards. To those who dwelt upon the high ground, and so escaped the flood, it will be positive satisfaction to know that the deluge was a punishment sent upon the lowlanders on account of their desperately wicked hearts. The folks who have water in their cellars, however, will probably cling to a more materialistic view – that the high-water line was drawn in accordance with natural topography rather than comparative depravity."

The reasons which lead people in general to suppose these calamities to be "special judgments" are founded, we believe, mainly on the dealings of God with Israel, upon whom he sent calamities, captivities, etc., as national punishments for national sins. But let us remember that Israel was a peculiar people, chosen of God for a special purpose, and, like the saints of the Gospel age, dealt with in a peculiar manner, different from the world. To them he said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) Israel was the only nation which Jehovah directly governed: therefore he chastised their sins, and made his promises to them, while other nations were left under the dominion of Satan, the prince of this world, until he whose right it is, shall have come and established the kingdom of God under the whole heavens.

While remembering that God has used calamities, such as the Deluge and the destruction of Sodom, as punishments and examples of an overthrow of the ungodly, it should not be forgotten that those

were examples of those who should afterward live ungodly. And these examples are not examples of God's dealings in the present time, but are examples of the punishment or destruction awaiting the finally incorrigible during or at the close of the Millennial judgment period, or day. That Peter so applies those calamities as examples of the future, see 2 Pet. 2:4-9.

In Jesus' day some had the same impression, that great disasters indicated God's special displeasure; but Jesus corrected them, saying: "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise PERISH."

These words of Jesus contain the key to what we believe is the correct view of this subject in the last word, perish. The fact is that the great calamity, DEATH, of which pestilences, earthquakes, floods, etc., are only incidentals, has passed upon ALL MEN, because all are sinners. (Rom. 5:12.) We have become so accustomed to death, the great calamity which is rapidly swallowing up the whole race, that it, the greatest of all losses, and the cause of all others, is looked upon as a proper and natural matter. If, however, things were properly considered, death as a whole would be seen as the great calamity, and the floods, etc., which only hasten it to a few, would be of comparatively little importance.

As death, the great calamity and curse, was caused by sin, so all of these calamities spring from the same cause, and are under the control of him that has the power of death, that is the devil (Heb. 2:14), whose dominion and power, thank God, is soon to be taken away and given to the Prince of Peace. As death is the result of sin, so are pestilences, tornadoes, etc.

By one man's disobedience, death with its numerous channels of sickness and disaster passed upon all men, and those who meet it in one way avoid it in others; but all meet it in some form.

This will be apparent when we remember that when Adam became a sinner, not only did the curse of death fall upon him, but the entire dominion of his kingdom – the earth – suffered, and is in a cursed condition. (Gen. 3:17.) For a time Satan is permitted to usurp the dominion of earth, and while seemingly working out his own plans, he at the same time acts as the agent of justice, to execute the penalty of sin. This being true, he is the one who by permission exercises the destructive power upon the earth; and Jehovah does not interfere because mankind has justly come under the curse of a violated law, death; and because man is gaining a valuable lesson under the present dominion of evil and death, which will benefit him when the curse is lifted not only legally, but actually, by the Redeemer who for this cause was manifested, "that he **[R584 : page 1]** might destroy DEATH [the great catastrophe in all its forms] and him that hath the power of death, [and who brings to pass the various calamities] that is, the devil."

As soon as the new prince, Immanuel, takes possession of the kingdom a great change will begin, both in the world of nature and of mankind. The curse being cancelled will be removed, and the blessings purchased by the "precious blood of Christ" will be bestowed. So great will be the change under the new administration, that in symbol it is called a new heavens [new spiritual ruling power]. Behold he will make all things new: he will re-new or restore all things to harmony with God, and to a condition which from God's standpoint, is "very good."

Hence we regard those disasters, not as special punishments, but as parts of the general curse, results of sin; but all working out in harmony with God's design an ultimate good to those rightly

exercised thereby. We have heretofore seen that the prophet Job was made a type of mankind; that the disaster and trouble and losses which befell him illustrated the losses sustained by mankind, and that his restoration to favor and after-blessing, foreshadowed the "restitution of all things" to mankind. (Acts 3:19). And we call to mind that the source of his trouble was Satan (Job 1:12), whom God in wisdom permitted to have power over him. As then the whirlwind, etc., was the agent of Satan, so we claim it is to-day. So, too, it was in Jesus' day. Jesus did not go about opposing the Father's will. If the Father had caused the death of Lazarus, would Jesus have opposed him by undoing his work? If Jehovah had caused the storm on the Sea of Galilee, which nearly overwhelmed the Lord and his disciples, would Jesus have been justified in stilling that tempest? But if the sickness and death and storms which Jesus counteracted were the work of Satan, the present "prince of the world," then all is clear, and we and all creation groan and travail and wait for the glorious reign of the new prince, whose relief was foreshadowed by the acts of his earthly ministry, praying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth."

When the night of sin and suffering and weeping is over, and the Son of Righteousness arises with healing in his wings for the various troubles of man and of earth, the mists of ignorance will be dispelled, and it will be seen that not Jehovah, but man's sin and his present prince, Satan, has been the direct cause of earth's woe and sorrow.

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## **EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.**

Palmyra, Ills., Feb. 13, 1884.

MR. C. T. RUSSELL – Dear Brother: The papers and pamphlets received all right; to say we thank you for your kindness

in ministering to our necessities but feebly expresses our feelings, we know your reward is sure, but it is not now. We are free, pray that we may have strength to walk according to our light. Our appetites increase with the use of the strong meat we receive and we feel deeply the responsibility of walking according to his will.

May you have all knowledge and boldness to do His will.

Your sister in the Lord,

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**Howell, Mich., Feb. 13, 1884.**

BRO. RUSSELL – Dear Friend: There is a great inquiry after "Food" and I have loaned and given away all I have and hope they are doing good. We find considerable opposition to some of the interpretations given to the Bible texts, but we find as a rule, that consecrated Christians, who are "hungering and thirsting" after righteousness, hail it as a blessing, and grow in the light that it gives.

Can you send us more copies?

Your Bro. in Christ,

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[We send some sample papers for new readers and only two of "Food;" we are sparing them for those whose interest is awakened by the tract papers. "Food" and "Tabernacle" are not so plentiful as they used to be, hence our carefulness, but the papers sent are even better adapted to new readers. The Lord give you grace and wisdom to preach the glad tidings both by the papers and your words and by your lives the living epistles known and read soonest by your friends and neighbors. – EDITOR.]

## **New Hampton, N.Y.**

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – I received the papers and pamphlets in due time and in good condition, but did not write until I should know something of the results of my labors for the Master.

In spite of the opposition I have encountered, I am happy to state that my labors have not been in vain. Occasionally I have been encouraged by meeting a hungry soul, one willing and even anxious to partake of the bread of life.

As to the "Tabernacle," it gives me great pleasure to state that God in his mercy has allowed me the privilege of accepting, understanding and fully enjoying its teachings. Studying the Word in connection with this pamphlet surpasses any pleasure I have yet known. Every part of the Word becomes pregnant with new significance. No human policy mars its splendor, but it becomes as a mirror, in which God [R583 : page 2] and his attributes are distinctly discerned by the "eye of faith." While, under this new influence, the sinner is startled into the consciousness that God is a pitying friend.

Surely the luminary of truth is at last shedding its rays on the sleeping masses of mankind. But how shall men be enabled to comprehend it? And how, except by divine interpretation, can the scales of prejudice be taken from their eyes, in order that the pure light of the gospel may shine in?

Truly it is an important time. The wonders of God's word are being revealed. The prophecies that have held the world in awe for centuries, are at last being fulfilled; but, alas! how few realize that it is the "fulness of time." Let us continue to proclaim the "glad tidings of great joy...unto all people, and trust the results with the common Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours sincerely,

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### **Hillsboro, Oregon.**

MRS. C. T. RUSSELL – Dear Sister: I have some precious names to place before you, to whom please send samples of the TOWER. Yes, I think truly God sent me here to break the chains of poor captives. About two weeks ago I heard of a lady in this place who was a great Bible student. I called, found a plain, quiet, middle-aged woman in the midst of her family. In the corner of the chief room was a stand with a large Bible and some histories, showing me instantly that mind and heart were at work. I cautiously introduced the burden, I should say joy, of my life – the better way – and found she was of the Christadelphian flock. I did not in any way condemn them, but after gaining her heart by my appreciation of her student life in the midst of cares I took up her Bible, well marked in the direction of a night of eternal darkness from a material standpoint, and I quickly found some dawning light and sunshine. I brought smiles to her face, and tears, not of sorrow, but of joy, to her eyes – Oh how gladly she drank in the goodness of God. Love is so much better a master than fear.

Since then she comes to see me, and we feast from the deep unfailing fountain in the great storehouse. I have loaned and given away most of my WATCH TOWERS. This lady wants to study these things now, and she is a rapid student for she is so earnest. She wishes now to go to her brethren, some fifty miles away, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for her – God willing I will go with her. In my weakness my Master will show his power.

Yesterday a farmer brought us some produce and took dinner with us. I found him quite scholarly, but without faith in the God of resurrection. Nature is his book. I improved the time in showing the



goodness of the God whom we love and serve. He was surprised that I did not get angry or defend popular theology, and said he had not read the Bible for twenty years. I know he must be earnestly seeking truth, but how far he goes away from it. When he got his team ready, he came in and asked me if I could go out to his place and stay a few days and teach them in our way. He said he would bring his wife and the hack and take my boy Robbie and I out if my husband could not leave. Oh how earnestly I pray that my words may be blessed. Oh, to bring joy and gladness into the regions of darkness.

It seemed almost like inviting persecution to introduce the subject of Restitution in the "Disciple" prayer-meeting. I earnestly prayed that if I was to speak there the Lord would open a door for me. Elder \_\_\_\_\_ led, and read Matt. 11:20-30, and spoke somewhat on the subject referred to. Then he very nobly and earnestly invited all present to present their views. I waited until almost all present had done so. Nearly all reflected what the leader had said. Dare I let this rare opportunity go? I did not, and God gave me strength and clearness of expression.

I find Jonah's prototype in preachers of to-day. How offended they get to think God is going to be so good to the great mass of mankind. The East wind is blowing. Thank God it comes from sun-rising and not sunset, and all shades (gourds) will wither and blow away, even though the sun beat on the intellect of these college owls who blink in the sunshine.

I gave a copy of Z.W.T. to a missionary of Alaska and will get the address of some men in Portland, whose homes are in Abbysinia, Greece and Sandwich Islands.

Dear lovely Texas (my former home) I pray the truth will find a voice there. I will write to a friend in Brownwood – She is an Episcopalean but not satisfied. Who knoweth if she be come into

the kingdom for such a time as this. She is good, strong, and true with a joyful spirit but painful body. I am lovingly your sister in Christ.

MRS. \_\_\_\_\_.