

INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

At the close of the class last time, Mr. Wallis spoke of his experience as a boy in putting up fence posts. He said they would put up the posts some distance away and then they would build up the intermediate ones so as to be in a straight line toward it. There is an analogy here that is of value in the interpretation of Scripture. We are apt to be misled if we do not look some distance ahead, if we merely look at the next word or two. We have to interpret in the light of the context. At the same time, I think that probably a better illustration for interpreting ~~the~~ ^{of} Scripture/ could be drawn from the example of one trying to follow a trail through mountainous country. Sometimes the trail is quite clear; at other times, it becomes obscure; Sometimes it becomes so vague that it is difficult to follow and one might go on in any one of two or three different directions. At such times one can look ahead and see where the trail is apt to lead. One can see definitely the place to which it is going to come after a little time. Then one can undertake to head directly toward this place. Yet one cannot be sure that the trail will go immediately in that direction. It may make something of a detour on the way.

I had an experience a few weeks ago in the mountains in Virginia. I had come along the ridge of a rather high hill. I knew that the trail was to go up the hill opposite me. Between me and it there was quite a ravine. Over across as it would I could see part of the trail ~~on~~/up the mountain. The indications where I was became quite obscure but they seemed to be heading off to the right instead of going down the ravine and up the other side. I feared that I might be getting on a trail that would lead me astray into some section quite different from that in which I wished to go. At the same time I could see that the ravine was rather deep between me and the hill opposite, and that it was sloping down to the left, so that if I went on further to the right, there was a possibility that I would not have to descend so low in order to get up the other side.