

The Berean.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—Acts xvii. 11.

No. 32.]

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[Vol. I.]

PSALM XXXI.

With years oppress'd, with sorrows worn,
Dejected, harass'd, sick, forlorn,
To thee, O God, I pray;
To thee my wither'd hands arise,
To thee I lift these failing eyes,
O! cast me not away!

Thy mercy heard my infant prayer,
Thy love, with all a mother's care,
Sustain'd my childish days;
Thy goodness watch'd my ripening youth,
And form'd my heart to love thy truth,
And fill'd my lips with praise.

O Saviour! has thy grace declin'd?
Can years affect th' Eternal Mind?
Or time its love decay?
A thousand ages pass thy sight,
And all their long and weary flight
Is gone like yesterday.

Then, even in age and grief, thy name
Shall still my languid heart inflame,
And bow my faltering knee:
Oh! yet this bosom feels the fire,
This trembling hand and drooping lyro
Have yet a strain for thee!

Yes! broken, tuneless, still, O Lord,
This voice transported shall record
Thy goodness tried so long;
Till, sinking slow, with calm decay
Its feeble murmurs die away
Into a seraph's song!

Sir Robert Grant.

THE BAPTISMAL BLESSING.

From Clark's Walk about Zion.

Twenty-five years ago, in a retired village in the Eastern States, there stood amid a cluster of pines a small neat Grecian edifice, where the worshippers of the Most High weekly assembled to offer up their devotions. It was in the lovely month of May, on a Sabbath morn, while all nature was radiant with the beams of the great luminary, that hung resplendent in the heavens, that there might have been seen moving to that edifice, two parents with five children. The two elder sons were bounding along with all the buoyancy of young boyhood, full of life and spirits. The hand of the mother was leading a little one about two years old, while that of the father was guiding the steps of another that might have been twice that age. A domestic, bearing an infant neatly clad, and that was sweetly smiling as it gazed around upon the new scene, amid which it was borne, brought up the train. They entered the house of God. The service proceeded. At length a call was made, that the children which were to be baptized, should be brought forward. This family then rose and approached the baptismal font, to enter into covenant with God.

The scene was one of deep and absorbing interest. The parents felt that no transaction in which they would ever be engaged, for their children could be more solemn or momentous than this. They fully realized that they were in the presence of Jehovah. They believed what he had spoken by the mouth of his holy prophet—"the promise is to you and to your children." They considered that that promise did guarantee to the infant children of believers, who were rightly given up to God in covenant, all the blessings of the covenant.

This act therefore of dedicating their children to God was with them no empty, thoughtless ceremony. For weeks they had prayed over this subject, and entreated God to prepare them rightly to offer their children to him in the way of his appointment. And now as they stood before the Lord with their little infant band around them, overshadowed by all the solemn considerations which the occasion was calculated to awaken, and presented one and another of their dear offspring to the man of God, to be sprinkled in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, they fully believed, that God would bless and save each one.

When they retired from the house of the Lord, and at night-fall gathered their little group around the family altar, they felt that their whole household had now been given up to God, and that they must live as a family that were preparing to dwell for ever in his holy presence. With them religion was the main business of life. They now felt that they were under the most solemn obligations, to rear up their offspring as God's children. Had the child of a nobleman been committed to their care, to bring up, they would have endeavoured to have brought it up as a nobleman's child. And now that there had been committed to their care five of the Lord's children to bring up, they determined to bring them up, as the children of the Lord.

At the time to which reference has just been made, these parents had four sons and an infant daughter. The Lord subsequently blessed them with five other children, four of whom were daughters and the youngest a son. These were all successively offered to the Lord in baptism. Perhaps the members of no family were ever happier in each other than were these. Naturally amiable and sweet tempered, religion was the great bond which united them by its sacred influences in harmony and love. Every day was begun and ended with God. It could hardly be conceived that in such a soil, and under such benign and heavenly influences, there could spring up rank immorality or open vice. There were indeed no indications of this. The children were strictly moral in their external deportment, but still none of them evinced as yet any evidences of decided piety. When from day to day this happy family assembled around the domestic altar, an occasional cloud of gloom would come over the parents' hearts in relation to their offspring; for they believed that their children must be regenerated with the Holy Spirit in their moral nature, before

they could be truly the children of God. At such times, however, they would take hold of the divine promises, and stay their souls on the pledged word of the Lord.

These parents not only felt it their duty to pray frequently for, and with their children—not only to set before them a uniform example of piety, and give them pointed and practical instruction upon all the great truths of the Bible, but also to remind them of the relation in which they stood to God, as given up in covenant to him. In illustration of this I will here insert a note, which I received from Mr. R.—one day after having conversed with him, in relation to the blessing of God upon his offspring and the manner in which he viewed the subject of infant baptism. He fully believed that God would regenerate all children who were given up to him in faith, and were reared "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This idea he expressed fully in the conversation just referred to. Alluding to this, in the letter, he remarks: "With the views I have entertained respecting the rite of infant baptism, I have considered it an important duty, when my children have attained to years to understand the subject, to explain to them as clearly as possible the nature of the ordinance, as respects both parents and children. I have instructed them to consider, that they were made members of the visible church, and that there were great and precious promises made to them as such. I have taught them that it was a great blessing to be brought into the fold of Christ, and instead of being strangers and aliens, to be made partakers of children's blessings. But I have warned them of the danger of forfeiting all the blessings of the covenant through unbelief and disobedience. I have particularly at such times alluded to the confidence with which parents, who had so consecrated their offspring to God, could present them at the mercy seat in prayer; but I have warned them that no external rite, no prayers, nor tears, could save them without repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." There is another fact in this case, which I deem important.—In these views and endeavours, there has been a perfect agreement between myself and Mrs. R.—. And I doubt if we have, either of us, at any time, lost our hold upon the covenant, with respect to our children.—We have without doubt, had seasons of darkness, when faith has been very weak, but I believe it has never been extinguished.

Henry was the fourth son. It was he whom we described as being led at the time of his baptism to the house of God, by the hand of his mother.—He had now reached his fifteenth year. Through the admonition of a young friend, his mind seemed suddenly awakened to a deep sense of his guilt as a sinner before God. For many days he was greatly bowed down with the weight of his exceeding sinfulness. Notwithstanding the apparent blamelessness of his past life, he felt that his heart had been so turned away from God, that he could adopt as his own the lowliest expressions of confession, and say with one of old—"O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, for my iniquities are increased over my head, and my trespass is grown up into the heavens." But there was help in Israel concerning this thing. There was indeed found in his case, balm in Gilead, and a physician there. The light of God's reconciled countenance was made to shine upon him, and he was enabled to rejoice in the Saviour's pardoning love with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Pious parents who have seen a family of children growing up around them, without a single individual of them evincing any decisive evidence of being reconciled to God, and then have witnessed, when they least expected it, one of their number coming over to the side of the Lord, and exhibiting unequivocal manifestations of renewal of heart, can enter somewhat into the feelings of these parents on this occasion. Their hearts were indeed filled with joy and gladness, and the voice of thanksgiving and praise went up before the Lord, as an incense from the family altar.

Nearly three years had elapsed since the conversion of young H—, and during all this time he had manifested continual and multiplied evidences, that he was truly born of God. I ought perhaps to have mentioned before this, that Mr. R— in his earlier days had commanded a vessel, which in its various voyages, had visited almost every port, and circumnavigated the globe. He had however, of late, retired from this business, and his sons were now coming forward to take his place. The eldest had already become the commander of a vessel. On a certain occasion it was so arranged that Mr. R— and young H— were going as passengers in his vessel on a short voyage. Some of the incidents of the voyage are alluded to in the following letter written by Mr. R— to Mrs. R—, the beloved mother of his children:—

"Beloved Wife,—
"You have undoubtedly, through Mr. S—, heard something of our situation after the hard gale, which we had on Nantucket Shoals. I shall only state briefly what occurred. After leaving G—, we had (almost continually) a gale of wind for twelve days. And at the end of fifteen days we left N—, and in just three weeks, we arrived at this place, without any damage, but with much hardship. Two nights and a day we were at anchor on the shoals, during which the wind blew so hard that we had great fears of losing our anchor, with but little prospect of saving our lives. A great deal of the time, the vessel plunged the end of her gib-boom in the water. After that wind abated, we got up our anchor, which was the next Monday after we left G—. The morning was pleasant, and we hoped for a pleasant voyage, but oh! how fleeting are all earthly promises of good! In

a few hours another gale from the south-west attacked us, far more violent than the former one, and attended with much more danger. We were about half way over the shoals. To proceed was impossible, and to return nearly so. If the vessel had struck, we must have perished. But God had mercy on us, and found out a way for us to escape. To give you any correct idea of our situation is impossible. I thought we might say with the Apostle, we were 'a night and a day in the deep.' After getting safe at anchor, we had a head wind all that week, since which our voyage has been pleasant.

"But I know that you feel anxious to know the state of my feelings and hopes, during the dark season. And I can speak to you, on that subject, in more intelligible language. When we commenced our voyage, it was with prayer. I thought I could commit my all to that merciful Being, who had all my life watched over me, with more than a parent's care, and who had so recently granted me the quickening influences of his Spirit, and by this, a new hope in my soul. I did feel in the darkest hours a hope that we should make our voyage in safety. I did not for a moment doubt that it would end in the glory of God. I could not but hope that my ship-mates, especially my children, would receive some good impression. At one time I thought it might be the purpose of God, that my life should terminate there. And in that view, I could not but magnify his goodness, in so turning my thoughts and affections from earth to heaven. I could easily perceive that God might make my death the means of quickening my christian brethren in N—. I could hope that it might prove the salvation of some, or all of my children.—With such considerations, and with most appalling danger all around us, I could not but think it probable that my time was short. But you wish to know how I supported my hope in this trying hour. I hardly dare answer this solemn inquiry, for I know how easily one may be deceived in such an alternative. But I think it was made the occasion of much searching of heart to me. I think I was prepared to say amen! to the determination of my judge. My thoughts and my anxieties were in a measure turned away from myself, to those who were alike exposed to danger without a hope in Christ. I don't know that I can say more."

On the occasion alluded to in the preceding letter, it might be well said that the whole ship's crew "saw the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. For at his word the stormy winds arose, which lifted up the waves thereof. They were carried up to the Heaven, they went down again to the depths: their souls melted away because of trouble. They reeled to and fro, and staggered like a drunken man, and were at their wit's end." The tempest swept over them with tremendous fury, and the breakers were at hand. Destruction seemed stalking through the deep in a thousand hideous forms.

"But they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He made the storm to cease, and the waves thereof were still. Then they were glad because they were at rest, and soon were they brought unto the haven where they would be." As soon as the storm had subsided, and all again was calm, Mr. R— seized upon the earliest opportunity to have a private interview with his two sons who were on board.—He begged them to consider what a deliverance had been vouchsafed to them. "What," said he, "would have been your probable doom, had God seen fit to have permitted the vessel to have been lost, and you to have gone down to the bottom of the sea? Had he seen fit to have summoned you to his bar amid the wild howlings of the storm, and the angry surges of the deep?"

H— replied: "My mind was upon this very subject. I was led to close self-examination, and when there seemed no possibility of escape, I felt that I could say 'Lord, here am I, I give myself up into thy hands, I hope in thy promises.' And immediately the words of the prophet came to my mind, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'"

This was indeed remarkable. But it was like a cordial to a christian father's heart. It was the last conversation that Mr. R— ever had with this son on the subject of religion. In a few weeks H— went out in another vessel to the West Indies. And the first intelligence the parents received in relation to him, was that strangers had closed his dying eyes, and that he was buried in a foreign land. It seems that in a short time after his arrival, he was seized with one of the fevers incident to the climate, and lived only a few days.—The bereaved parents, however, had every reason to believe that God had fulfilled his promise in reference to this child, and that he had died, being "regenerated and grafted into the body of Christ."

They now viewed him as garnered up in glory, and safe within the chrysolite walls of the New Jerusalem. And now their thoughts turned with increased solicitude to their surviving children, and their prayers were offered with more fervency, that they also might be brought in, and "saved with the remnant of the true Israelites."

(To be continued.)

MILLERISM.

To the Editor of the Montreal Herald.
Sir,—Having learned from the most credible witnesses the painful state of religious excitement which prevails throughout the Eastern Townships and North American gene-

rally on the subject of Millerism, and deprecating the fearful reaction of unanswered expectations on the minds of the ignorant and deluded, I think it my duty, as a Christian and a Minister, to address a few words to the public through the medium of your paper.

It is characteristic of fanaticism under all its forms, that, passing by the broad and general declarations of the word of truth, it fastens on some passage of difficult interpretation to force out of it, or, if not, into it, some deep and mysterious meaning calculated to subvert the interests of party, or suited to the peculiarity—native or educational—of individual minds. Instead of referring to the more difficult passages to those of more obvious meaning, and thus interpreting scripture by harmonizing text with text, or at least, building no doctrine on that which is difficult of interpretation, the maintaining of which would do violence to the general teaching of scripture, or grate discordantly amidst the harmony of universal truth, they reverse the order, and make the most explicit declarations of the bible bend to a fanciful interpretation arbitrarily imposed by them on the most enigmatical and obscure, and often wholly at variance with the plainest passages of the word of God. So it is with the party above referred to.—I say not, consciously. God forbid. I only state a fact.

"Will thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i: 6, 7) was the question of the disciples to the risen Jesus, "and he said, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."—This is plain: the times or the seasons are not our concern—they are God's—"them He hath put in His own power." Think you, then, that Mr. Miller knows what God has not been pleased to reveal—what He has been pleased to conceal? Again, (Mark xiii: 32, 33, 35, 36,) "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping." See also Matth. xxiv: 36, 39, 42, 44.—Here I am told that neither man, angel, nor the Son of God knows the time of the end; and yet Mr. Miller knows it! Knows what in the councils of the God-head, the Father (as in Acts i: 7) has been pleased to retain as his own peculiar prerogative in the scheme of universal Providence so long at least as that scheme is mediatorial! But here I am met by a sophism [I mean not an intentional one]. It is true, it is said, no one knows the day or the hour, but he may know the year! To me it appears a sufficient refutation of such an interpretation, that it seems unnatural and forced—that it never would have been thought of, had not some favourite scheme appeared to necessitate it. But again; this mode of interpretation takes the edge from off the motive by which our Saviour enforces the precept in our text: "Watch and pray, for ye know not when." Now if day or hour means simply and only day or hour, then, I argue, men might know the week of the coming of the Son of man. Now let it be granted that men did know the week (nay, even the year); then might they spend all the previous period in security and carelessness, as knowing that the master of the house would not come before a certain given period; and to those who lived before that period, the precept "watch and pray" had no "for"—no motive to enforce it. But, 3rd, the phrase—"that day or that hour" of verse 32 is in verse 33 exchanged for "when the time is" showing that it is to be taken in a general and not in a restricted sense.—The Millerites have a newspaper called the "Midnight Cry," but the scriptures inform us, that we "know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning." In short, that the Father only knows—that, in the economy of redemption, this is exclusively his prerogative.

Again, (Matt. xxiv: 14,) "The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." How soon it may be preached to all, none can tell. But that there are thousands and tens of thousands—that there are nations in Africa and Asia—who never yet heard the name of Christ, is a humiliating truth. These are historical facts which cannot be falsified or denied.

But without pressing further the argument against human prescience obviously deducible from a natural and honest interpretation of these plain passages, we propose meeting Mr. Miller on his own grounds, and without questioning his gratuitous assumption that 2,300 days mean 2,300 prophetic years, we are prepared to show that he has antedated by a few hundred years the period for the termination of the vision, or, as he thinks, of the end of the world. Daniel viii: 13, 14, is acknowledgedly the stronghold of Millerism. Many of your readers may not understand this. I shall therefore briefly state Mr. Miller's arguments before endeavouring to confute them. In Daniel viii: 13, 14, we read: "Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, how long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? and he said unto me 2,300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." These 2,300 days or years, thinks Mr. Miller, commence from the going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem (or about that time) i. e. from the time of Cyrus the Great or 480 years before the crucifixion. In these 2,300 are, he asserts, included the 70 weeks or rather 70 sevens (of days or years) is not de-

termined in the prophecy) or hebdomads of Daniel, ix: 24, from which if we take 33 years—the supposed period of the life of Christ—there remain 457 years to his birth. Then by subtracting 457 years from 2300 we have the year of our Lord 1843.

Thus 490 less 33, equal to 457, which subtracted from 2300, leave 1843. Without stopping to confute the absurdity of dating the abolition of the Jews' hierarchical polity, from the very period of their restoration to their former privileges and rank amongst the nations (Dan. ix: 25)—without even hurling a single missile at the superstructure of suppositions pregnable at every point, I shall hasten at once to the direct argument.

The point now to be decided is, from what period are we to date the commencement of the 2300 days or years. Mr. Miller dates from the year 457 before the birth of Christ. I date them nearly 300 years later. The question at issue shall be determined by the words of the prophecy and by the interpretation given them by the angel. I shall give the prophecy and the interpretation in parallel columns as they appear in Daniel viii.

Prophecy. Daniel viii: 1, 2, 3. "I, Daniel, saw in a vision, a ram (4) having two horns, and no goat fore him. (5) and a he-goat from the west (Alexander the Great) between his eyes, and (7) Now, (22) this being broken off, whereas four kingdoms shall stand up for it, four kings shall stand up; and the great horn was broken; and four other generals divided his kingdom between them; and (23) of one of them came forth a little horn, a King of fierce countenance; shall prosper and precise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people and the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and practised and prospered. Then I heard (18) one saint speaking, and another said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? and (14) he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."	Interpretation. Daniel viii: 20. "The Kings of Media and Persia are the ram with two horns, and (21) the he-goat is the King of Greece, and the great horn the King of Macedonia (Alexander the Great); whereas four kingdoms shall stand up for it, four kings shall stand up; and his four generals divided his kingdom between them; and (23) of one of them came forth a little horn, a King of fierce countenance shall prosper and precise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people and the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and practised and prospered. Then I heard (18) one saint speaking, and another said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? and (14) he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."
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The first question to be determined here is obviously, by whom was "the daily sacrifice" to be taken away? It was not by Cyrus (457 years before Christ and King of Media and Persia); nor by Alexander the Great; nor by his four generals who succeeded him; nor by a king descended "from one of them," "in the latter period" of the existence "of their kingdom": in other words, as history testifies, by Antiochus Epiphanes, about 170 years before Christ. "By him the daily sacrifice was taken away" (Dan. viii: 11). From this period, then, are we to date the 2300 days, or, as some think, years. So that even on Mr. Miller's supposition, that the termination of the 2300 years is the appointed period for the world's destruction, our planet is destined to survive nearly 300 years before the time of her final catastrophe shall have arrived. Thus—

Sum total	2300
Antiochus Epiphanes	170
Year of the world's destruction, (if such be the meaning of the cleansing of the Sanctuary, Dan. viii: 14)	2130
Present year	1843

There remain therefore, 287 (say 280) years to run before the world will be destroyed. This period, (unless the world profit more by the experience of the future than it has by that of the past), I can easily imagine, will be a hot-bed for diviners, in which prophets will spring up like mushrooms, and tragedies long since acted and now re-acting, be introduced upon the stage again. But "the times and the seasons the Father hath put in his own power," and "of that day and that hour knoweth no" created intelligence either in the armies of heaven or amongst the inhabitants of the earth; no, not even the son, but the Father.—Mark xiii: 32.

Thus have I hurriedly glanced at the question of Millerism, not so much with the intention of propounding any new theory or scheme of prophetic interpretation, as to combat and annihilate one obviously incorrect—to get rid of an error productive of the most direful present results, and likely to produce, by its reaction, consequences still more fearful on the minds of those who have been deluded by it. But there is, Sir, a question still deeper and more important than even the present. It is this: Are there, under the rule of a wise and gracious Providence, any effective means for ridding the world of fanaticism and enthusiasm altogether, or to a very great extent? If so, what are those means? Perhaps some of your readers would favour the world with a reply. It is a question in which the whole human family are interested—deeply interested.—With these few remarks, I remain, Sir, &c.

May, 1843.
J. A. ALLEN.