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The Christian's Warfare.

(1 Cor. 9: 24-27.)

THE earnest exhortations of the faithful apostle to the Gentiles were most clearly illustrated in his noble course of life. He shunned no danger, shrank from no labor or reproach, and bravely and cheerfully endured hardness, and suffered the loss of all things temporal that he might win Christ and be approved of Him. As we look upon such a course and consider the fortitude and the strength of character necessary so to run, we may well conclude that, except we be similarly supplied with the help of Divine grace, we shall not be able to persevere to the end. St. Paul sped along in that race not in his own strength, but in the strength which God supplied, and the promise OF such aid is none the less ours as it was his.

The Divine grace is imparted to us through the exceeding great and precious promises of God, inspiring us with new and glorious hopes beyond the wreck and ruin of the present order of things. Permitting our minds to dwell upon these promises, we see in the now rapidly approaching dawn of the day of Christ 'a new heavens and a new earth' ; and by faith we may sit together with Him in the "heavenly places." By faith we see also the blessed privileges of that exalted station, and the Divinely appointed work in which the saints will be engaged together with Christ. A weary and groaning creation awaits this ministry of power.

In running in this race, a part of the conditions set down is the development of that loving and pitiful spirit of the Master, and the more we embrace this disposition the more will we be able to appreciate the privilege of being co-laborers together with Christ. If we are cold and selfish and untouched with 'the feelings of earth's infirmities, if the woes of our fellowmen do not awaken in us feelings of sympathy and a desire to help, we can have no real appreciation of the prize of our high calling in the great race in which we need one another's assistance.

When we realise fully our own failings and shortcomings, then only can we understand how to sympathise with the weaknesses of others and remember that many have hereditary causes, and, therefore, we are not to lay all shortcomings to their personal charge. We will be eager to clear their minds from the mists of ignorance and superstition, and the bias of prejudices, and to help all on to better ideas of life, its relationships and responsibilities. We will seek to gather out of their pathway as many as possible of the stumbling stones whereby so many are now falling headlong in their race-course. We will be ready to declare to them the everlasting gospel of salvation, and to open their deaf ears and their blind eyes. If such are our sympathies toward the world of sinners, which God so loved, then we are able to appreciate to some extent the privileges of our high calling, when, as joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom, we could

put into actual execution all our benevolent desires for the uplifting and healing of a sin-sick world.

Any who have ever experienced the joy of converting one from the error of his ways, and of establishing his feet upon the rock of Christ, may have some idea of the joy that will attend the ministry of the saints when they are fully endued with Divine power ; for then they will not be hampered, but every effort put forth will be a success. But though inspired with such a hope of service for the whole world in God's appointed time and of blessed association with Christ in it, we must remember that we have yet to "strive" for the prize of our high calling; and not only so, but we must strive lawfully. We must run our race, not only with diligence, energy, patience and perseverance, but we must run according to the prescribed rules, as otherwise our labor will be in vain.

First of all we must enter into this course by the "strait gate" by a full consecration to the Lord, after exercising faith in the precious blood of Christ as our ransom. price. If we do not enter by this door we are not counted in the race for the prize, no matter how zealously we run. This is the first rule for those who would so run as to obtain. The Scripture says, "Enter ye at the strait gate; because strait is the gate and, narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few thereby that find it." Having so entered, the apostle now urges that we be filled with the spirit of Christ, that we may not be led by the desires -of the flesh a way from God and from the course which He has marked out. If we are filled with the spirit, with the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, we will act from the same motives ; it will be our meat and drink to do the Father's will.

Christ was so full of sympathy with humanity, and so thoroughly of one mind with the Father, that He could not do otherwise than devote His life to the good of others. In all His labors, He strictly observed the Divine plan. Though like the Father He loved the whole world, He did not go beyond Israel to bless the Gentiles with His ministry, because the appointed time. for that work had not yet come. He observed God's times and seasons and methods. He never recklessly exposed His life until He recognised from the writings of the prophets that His hour had come to be delivered into the hands of His enemies. He taught His disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles until the due time; and then they went forth. Likewise it is stated, He did not make long prayers on the street corners to be heard of men nor exhort the multitude with noisy harangue. As the prophet indicated, "He; did not lift up His voice in the streets nor cry, aloud." He chose God's methods, which are rational and wise, and which are effective in selecting ,out from among men the class which He desires to be heirs of the promised kingdom.

It is for those who would so run as to obtain the prize to mark these footprints of the Master and be filled more and more with His spirit. If so filled, we, like Him, will desire to be as free from the world and its enticements and have our time as free as possible for the Lord's service. To have the mind of Christ is, indeed, the one requirement of lawful striving, a mind which humbly and faithfully submits itself to the will of God as expressed in His great plan of the ages.

The Apostle says, "I, therefore, so run not as uncertainly ; so fight not as one that beateth the air." He had a definite knowledge as to what constitutes the prize: He was not uncertain about it, it was not a question with him as to its being one thing or another. He knew that the high calling in Christ Jesus is that we may be heirs with Him, if we suffer with Him.

Neither was the apostle uncertain :as to the terms and conditions of the race. He knew that they were even unto death ; and that if he should seek to save his life he would lose it. Neither was he uncertain as to his own determination. He knew positively that he had entered the course. He was not of those who merely say, I hope to do so some time; he had made his covenant with the Lord,—of- sacrifice unto death. Nor was the apostle uncertain as to his opportunity to gain the prize. He knew that it remained with him to will and to do, in harmony with God's good pleasure. He knew that nothing impossible was required of him in this race, that the terms and conditions of the race include, "grace to help in every time of need;" and that

this grace and help would come from the Lord. Hence, the apostle's expression, that there is no uncertainty from first to last for the runners in this racecourse. Thus it may be with all, under the guiding eye of the great Redeemer. We may each make our calling and election sure—"If ye do these things, ye shall never

fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:10, 11).

The apostle tells us that he kept his body under, lest having preached to others the good tidings, he himself should be a castaway. The body originally belonged to the natural man, the natural will. The new will cannot properly be served by the old body, because the new mind is perfect and the body imperfect. When the new mind, the mind of Christ, therefore takes into possession the mortal body, it has more or less difficulty. The mind is not suited to the body, nor the body to the mind. It is the work, therefore, of the new will to show its obedience to the Lord, its full loyalty to the Divine will. Not only are we all thus to brow-beat and mortify the body, but additionally we are 'to bring it into subjection. It is to be made to serve the new creature. The apostle says, "But if the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit." The holy Spirit, which comes to us more and more as we feed upon the Lord, assists us to conform our lives to His will and 'also quicken our mortal bodies to the service of the truth. There are not two creatures, but just one, for we cannot be two creatures at once.

But the new creature has not its new body as yet. There is an outward man, which the world may think is the individual, but in proportion, as the outward man is brought into subjection and service, the new creature is growing stronger, until eventually, with the death of the human body, God will give the new creature a new body in the resurrection. Then the new creature will be satisfied when it shall be found in His likeness.

There is a tendency for the body to rise from its condition of reckoned deadness. Hence, the new mind needs to be continually on guard in the good fight of faith. These battlings of the new mind against the flesh are a good fight, in the sense that they are fightings against sin and weaknesses that belong to the fallen nature. The entire course of the new creature is the course of faith. It would be impossible for one to keep up this battle against the flesh and its propensities and desires, unless he exercises faith in the promises and in the Lord as His helper.

In Heb. 4: 1, the Apostle Paul says, "Let us fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." He had no thought of coming short himself, yet he knew how necessary it was to exercise this godly fear, and urged those to whom he was writing to make their calling and election sure. As we well know, it is a great help in overcoming the fallen nature to have rightly 'made a full enlistment of every power and talent of mind and body to the service of the Lord. How important it is, also, to realise that the service' is unto death and that there is no room even to consider any suggestion to withdraw and cease to fight the good fight of faith. We are to remember that it is not the flesh, the old creature, which has entered the school of Christ, and is under instruction and preparation for the kingdom, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom. —(To be Continued.)

A Lunatic World.

"It is not a pleasant thing to be living at the present time," Dr. Russell Maltby told a Liverpool audience the other day. If we read a record of the doings of the world, we should not credit it were it not that we are now living through it. It would read like the proceedings of a kind of lunatic asylum. There has never

been such a state of affairs. All the experts have been beaten at their own trade. There is no statesman who knows the way out. "Don't let us throw stones at the statesmen to-day, who have difficulties such as no other statesmen ever had to face," added Dr. Maltby. "God is saying to the nations, 'You can have peace when you want it all together, but you cannot have it if you want it for yourselves.'"—'Christian World."

How Can We Doubt ?

No failure and no fear
Can baffle spring,

Nor quench the gladness
That the thrushes sing.

No heaviness of heart
Can dim the sight

Of wee green fingers
Stretching to the light.

Or dauntless courage
In the dark earth's beds,

From which triumphant
Snowdrops lift their heads.

God keeps His promise
To the smallest thing;

How can we doubt
In our immortal spring!

—Mary Eversley.

PEOPLES PAPER

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue.

Some Thoughts on the Theory of Universal Reconciliation.

The following- thoughts, for which we are indebted to a Brother in New Zealand,. are presented at this time as being very helpful on the theory above mentioned.

“The crux of the whole question lies in the interpretation and understanding of two words in the New Testament, viz., ‘Ever’ and ‘All.’ The former we may pass, as the claim that ‘Ever’ does not mean finality, but age-lasting has long been admitted and so understood by the Christian Church ; but the latter ‘All’ lends itself to two distinct meanings. First, a complete total of everything in creation irrespective of conditions Second, a complete and finished work after cleansing and purging.

“Mr. A. E. Knoch, the translator of ‘The Concordant Version’ of the New Testament, claims that ‘All’ includes every created being, and once created, God will eventually, by various processes, bring each individual into harmony with Holiness.

“Does the Apostle Paul mean that? Let us consider one illustration, -Hebrews 6:4-8; ‘For those once enlightened and having tasted the heavenly gift, and become partakers of holy spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers-of the coming age, and having fallen away, it is impossible to renew again to reformation, they having recrucified, and are exposing to contempt the Son of God. For that land having imbibed the rain frequently falling on it and producing vegetation useful to those for whom also it is cultivated receives a blessing from God ; but that yielding thorns and thistles is disapproved, and near to a curse; the end of which is burning’ (Diag.).

“Paul there illustrates his point by ‘-’the figure of land receiving all the blessings of rain, etc., and • producing two results, i.e., ‘useful vegetation,’ also ‘thorns and thistles.’ The former receives a blessing from God; but the latter is disapproved, near to a curse, the end of which is burning. There is no thought of transforming, ‘thorns and thistles’ into :good vegetation. It may be argued that the text states ‘near’ but the meaning is distinctly that such a finality as ‘burning’ is possible.

“Again, in Hebrews 10:26-31, Paul clearly states (verses 26), ‘If we should voluntarily sin after having received the knowledge of the truth there is no longer a sacrifice left for sins.’ In verses 28 and 29, he compares the punishment of death under Moses’ law with the ‘sorer punishment.’ ‘Will he deserve having trampled on the Son of God and esteemed as a common thing the Blood of the Covenant by which he was sanctified, and insulted the spirit of favor.’ That ‘sorer punishment’ is ‘second death,’ not chastisement, as Mr. Knoch declares. ‘Capital punishment’ is the extreme of the law, consequently anything less could not be superior.

“Now I can understand how conditions in the creation may become such as described in Rom. 14: 11, because when the earth is cleansed of the ‘thorns and thistles’ God will have provided a kingdom in which these conditions will prevail. For example, is that not exactly how the perfect Church’ is to be formed? There is no doubt that when the ‘Body’ is complete it will be perfect. Yet in reaching that state, there will be loss. Our Lord pictures it as a ‘Vine.’ He says that in the development, branches will be ‘‘cut off entirely, others reduced by pruning to perfect the fruit, yet the Wine,’’The Christ,’ will be perfect, complete without these. If we apply the same principle to the Final Kingdom, in the development there apparently will also be a purging and destroying of those unfruitful thorns and thistles. God knows and ‘shall not the God of; all the earth do right ‘? To our present understanding of the Scriptures that is so, and we must be most careful and prayerful not to accept any ‘new light’ which we cannot prove from the Scriptures.

“On leaving Auckland, I sent home for a pamphlet I once received on ‘Universal Reconciliation,’ and re-

read it. Leaving, for the present, the points already mentioned, I will mention two or three conclusions Mr. Knoch has reached, which I consider are absolutely unscriptural. The pamphlet is entitled, 'What are the facts concerning Universal Reconciliation and Eternal Torment,' by A. E. Knoch. Published by Concordant Publishing Concern.. According to A. E. Knoch, the fundamental of 'Universal Reconciliation' lies in the non-possession of i.e., free-will, power of choice or decision.

"We have always believed that that was the basis of our Eternal salvation—viz., our God given power to accept or reject God's offer of Jesus Christ's salvation. We have believed that was the difference between man and the lower creatures, that, in that sense God made man in His image, and it has always appealed to us as the only way by which the Father could get His love responded to in a way which He could accept and enjoy, viz., 'A willing heart' (Exod. 35: 5).

"Now, while some seem to think that there are certain Scriptures which appear to give 'Universal Reconciliation' a basis of probability, and certain texts which lend colour to Mr. Knoch's belief, yet in absolute contradiction to these the Bible teems with statements that God has endowed man with a free will and power of choice. That, Mr. Knoch positively denies—after arguing that texts such as Rom. 11:32, Rom. 9:16-18, Eph. 1: 11, prove that 'man' is a mere pawn on a chess board, he concludes thus, under the heading 'Man's so-called 'Free Will.' —'Because he is ignorant of the forces which move him he imagines he is free to will as he pleases. A child's will can be altered by a bauble. A wise mentor knows how to change a man's environment so that he wants to do the mentor's will. God alone has power over the sources that contribute to form our wills, and He can easily turn man's will against Him or for Him. Free-will is a philosophical fable. Man is a creature not a creator.' Page 9.

"On page 10 he states 'Human Responsibility' and says, 'Because of His will, no creature has any jurisdiction over his own destiny, in order to be lost eternally and suffer endless torment. The word of the Lord to Jerusalem: 'And ye would not.' Mat. 23: 37, so often brought up to prove man's 'free-will,' clearly proves the opposite, for Jerusalem shall yet receive Him, and be saved. In Romans 11: 31 we are distinctly told why they were stubborn. It was 'that He may be merciful to them..' Again, page 1.0.—"The philosophical argument for man's free will evades God's plain declaration that God's favour 'is not of him who is willing but of God the merciful' (Rom. 9:16). It seeks scriptural support in the first chapter of Genesis, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion (Gen. 1: 26), This likeness has to do with man's relation to the lower creation., not his wisdom, or his ;knowledge, his power or his will.'

"In these various passages quoted from the pamphlet, Mr. Knoch teaches that man is mere automaton, not drawn by God as Jesus said, but pushed. Indeed, the only result can • be the acceptance of 'Fatalism.' Man is then a creature forced to do evil, or forced to do right, so that God's purpose may be duly accomplished. To me there seems to 'be a much •deeper and grander meaning in God's- over-ruling providences and marvellous ways of working. He works all according to His will. His blessings are all gifts and graces, but he is calling for a willing obedience and love from hearts drawn to him, not forced to Him.

"In 2 Cor. 11; Paul warns, us very earnestly against deception, verse 3, 'but I am afraid lest, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, your minds may be corrupted from that simplicity and that pureness which is in the Anointed. For if he who is coming proclaims another Jesus whom we did not preach ; or you receive a different spirit which you did not receive; or other glad tidings which you did not embrace, you might well bear with it (or consider it).' And we must conserve that in its simplicity. Does there not appear to be a similarity between the doctrine of 'Universal Reconciliation,' and . that with which the serpent beguiled Eve? (Gen. 3:3, 4). 'God hath said, ye shall ,not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not -surely die.'

“Again God has said (Ezekiel 18:4), ‘The soul that sinneth it shall (lie: This condemnation is distinctly, in connection with the responsibility of individuals as we see by the context. Primarily men suffered on account of the father’s sins; but then each soul. will be personally responsible. Does ‘Universal Reconciliation’ not contradict that statement, and say ‘Thou shalt not surely die?’ Paul uses the same argument and warning in Rom. 0: 22, 23. ‘For the wages of sin is death : but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

“There is no doubt that ‘Universal Reconciliation’ makes a strong appeal- to our hearts, and as a Brother said to me, ‘Can- our hearts be kinder or greater than God’s?’ That-is true—we cannot exceed our loving heavenly Father in His love, or mercy or justice; but our hearts and minds may not be able to appreciate’ the wilfulness and hopelessness of the mind that wilt deliberately spurn God’s goodness. In that matter, I hold, we cannot judge. God only can read the heart.

“Let me just mention two more peculiar conclusions Mr. Knoch has come to in following this doctrine.

“First (the Church, or body of Christ, only commenced with Paul). Our understanding is that it commenced with Jesus, and the disciples at Pentecost, where the eleven were baptised with the holy Spirit.--Yet Mr: Knoch’ teaches— page 12:=The Bible teaches that many of the saved will be on the earth and never go to heaven (Rev. 21:22). The New Jerusalem comes out of heaven and will be on earth. Peter and the twelve apostles will never go to heaven. Only Paul and those connected with his ministry have a celestial destiny.’ If that is so what did our Lord mean in John 14:

3,—‘I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.’ And the apostle in 1 John 3:2. Was John not included in the ‘we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see. Him as He is.’ “

“Second. (There are no unfallen holy angels in Heaven). On page 39, he says—‘The Son does not need to be reconciled. I know of no other exception.’Unfallen angels are a figment of theology.’ His argument is, that if God is to reconcile all creation, then all creation must have fallen. I know of no scripture to that effect. (Jesus speaks of the. holy angels. There are clearly many angels who have kept faithful such as Gabriel.) Besides what about our Lord’s prayer? (Matt. 6:10). ‘Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.’ If there are no unfallen angels in Heaven, rather, if there are restored ones doing God’s will, then there must have been a previous salvation, and yet all salvation is through. Jesus, God’s Son. This doctrine seems to lead to confusion.

“I will conclude this attempt to explain my thoughts on ‘Universal Reconciliation’ by a quotation from a letter written to Mr. Knoch on this subject by our dearly beloved Bro. Russell. ‘It seems strange that there could be differences of opinion on matters so clearly stated in the Word of God. It must be that there is something wrong, something twisted, in some of our heads. To me it seems as plain as can be that the Bible declares that all the wicked will God destroy; again, that those who, during the’ Millennial age when brought to a knowledge of the truth, shall prove wilful sinners will be punished with everlasting destruction ; again, St. Peter’s statement, respecting the glorified Christ, Head and Body, and Millennial blessings. ‘Whosoever will. not obey that prophet will be destroyed. from among the people.’ Acts 3: 23, again, his statement, ‘they shall perish like unto brute beasts,’ It does seem strange that such plain statements can be made to signify the reverse to some minds! It does seem strange to me that any one understanding that the first death came upon all men through Adam, and that the second death is punishment for wilful personal sin, and that there is no redemption from the second death could think of all having everlasting life. I really cannot understand the mental processes by which they come to this conclusion. I confess that mine must be different.

“The Pastor further quotes Scriptures, which we have dealt with in this letter, so above is sufficient to

give you his thought and opinion.

“Just one more remark in relation to ‘Free Will.’ If man has no was our Lord mistaken when he yielded His to His Father’s? (John 5: 30). seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which sent me.’ Was John wrong in admitting a ‘will of man’ and also ‘A will of the flesh,’ when he spoke of the second birth (john 1.: 13)? ‘Which were born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh; nor of the will of man, but of God.’ Like Brother Russell, we feel, that the mental process required to transform these passages to mean ‘no will’ is beyond our weak powers. ‘Prove all things, hold fast that which is Good’,(1 Thess. 5:20).”

“The Plan of God—in Brief.”

A further supply of this fine little book is now on hand. Being a digest of “The Divine Plan of the Ages,” it will be found very useful to pass on the message of truth to those who have ears to hear. Posted to any address for 6d. per copy.

Regarding “Daily Manna.”

During the past month some further nice responses have been received from the brethren in Australia and overseas, and we trust to be able to announce very shortly that the work of printing is being undertaken, D.V.

As previously announced, the proposed “Daily Heavenly Manna” is to be cloth bound in the pocket edition, and the price for single copies will be about 1/9 posted. Further orders sent in right away will help in deciding what quantity may be printed.

Correspondence,

Queensland, 20th August, 1934,

Dear Bro.- I intended to write to you before this with regard to the printing of the "Daily Manna." Should the way open, if it is the Lord's will that you proceed with the printing, I will take one dozen. I would try and sell them here in the town at the cost price, when putting out tracts. I 'still have a little bundle of the "Voice" left, and when they are finished, I will send for more. I will know through the "People's Paper" if you should Print the "Manna," and will send the money then.

Well, dear Bro., I hope by the Lord's grace to do all I can in spreading His blessed and glorious truth, for the rest of my sojourn here. With Christian love; your fellow-servant by the Lord's grace. B.T.

Victoria.

The Secretary, Berean Bible Institute.

Dear Sir,-It was a most pleasant surprise yesterday to receive your kindly letter and the July issue of the "People's Paper." For these I thank you. I am only a newcomer to the Lord Jesus, who found me in my darkest hour of sin and trouble, and His Spirit has given me a most wonderful joy and light, and a desire to know Him and to serve Him.

I had not previously studied the Bible for some years, and then somewhat disinterestedly, but during the last five weeks (only) I have been "searching the Scriptures," and have found wonderful help and strength. Having surrendered! myself wholly to God,. I have faith in Him to fashion my soul as He will. A Christian brother has been of aid to me in this new life, and our last discussions centred largely 'around Christ's second coming, and seeing your coupon in the "Leader," I thought I might find more light on such Bible studies. In the pamphlets and the "People's Paper" which you have sent me, I have seen a means of a clear understanding of the teachings of God's Word.

I shall study the material you have sent me, and follow them with the Scriptural citations. I would be very grateful for any papers you can send me, that would assist me' in this new life which brings Christ very near to me.

I enclose the sum of 4/- to cover a year's subscription to the "People's Paper," and also some of your booklets, including, if possible, "Christ's Return," "Some of the Parables," and anything else that you would suggest.

Thank you for communicating with me. Wishing your Institute every measure of success in its work with the help of Christ Jesus. Yours faithfully, T.R.

N.S. Wales, 13/8/34.
Berean Biblical Institute.

Dear Sirs,—Receiving in my letter box your paper, namely, “The Voice,” and seeing that you would send copies of the following subjects while they last, kindly send me—”All About Hell,” “Where Are the Dead?” and “The Troubled World’s Hope.” Yours truly, V.A.

Victoria, 12th Aug., 1934.

Dear Bro.,—Greetings in our dear Redeemer’s name. As it is such a long time since I was last with you dear brethren, I thought I would write a little note, and let you know where I am. I had hoped to get into Class again before this, but as events turned out I was unable to do so. However, dear Bro., I am with you and the brethren each time in spirit, and pray always that God will richly bless each little one in the studies around His Word.

What a feast of beautiful spiritual things He provides for us from time to time; truly we are a privileged people, and it is a joy to be as to-day’s “Manna” text says, continually in that prayerful attitude of mind and heart, experiencing daily that cleansing from secret faults, and the spirit of God within us, keeping us from presumptuous, sins, letting Him control the words of our mouth, even the meditation of our hearts. (Psa. 19: 12-14).

I am about 90 miles out from Melbourne, and am camped in a tent by myself. It is very lonely, but affords me” great opportunities for prayer and study of the Word, which, I can assure you, dear Bro., I appreciate very much. It is good at times ‘to be alone with God, and He alone, is my sole Companion out here. As soon as convenient, I hope to get down for a week-end.

Will close now, with warmest Christian love to yourself and sister, and all the brethren. Your Bro. in Christ,

M.R.N.

Thy Will Be Done.

My Lord, Thy will not mine be done:
Whatever path Thy love shall choose for me,
Through desert sands, or if beside the sea,
Thy will be done!

Oh, may Thy will in me be done!
Should "harvest" labour be for me
Thy will, Or if I may but suffer and be still,—
Thy will be done!

My Father, let Thy will be done:
If sweet the cup Thou pourest for me to drink,
I'll praise Thee; but, if bitter, I'll not shrink,—
Thy will be done!

Forever may Thy will be done:
I would not choose, I leave it all with Thee,—
The pilgrimage, if short or long it be,
Thy will . be done!
—G. W. Seibert.

Tilling The Desert.

Italy's Achievement.

Italo Balbo, Governor of Tripolitania, has made his first report on the Italian North African colony since taking over his new duties recently, stated the Rome correspondent of the London "Morning Post."

The report reveals that the Italian colonist, who formerly proved one of the best labourers when, as an emigrant, he landed on foreign soil, is now showing his quality of endurance in Africa, and on territory over which his own national flag is flying. The formerly arid sands of Tripoli, near the sea, comprise an area of about half a million acres, of which nearly one-third have already been brought under cultivation by the Italian colonists.

The latest statistics show that the concessions under cultivation already have more than a million forest trees, some 20,000,000 vines, 68,000 fruit trees, chiefly peaches, 58,000 mulberries for the cultivation of the silk worm, 2,200,000 almond trees, and nearly two million olive trees.

There are 2500 model farmhouses, more than 2000 artificial wells, fourteen electric power stations with a vast network of wire distributing the current all over the colony, and some 200,000 acres of land reclaimed for cultivation.— News Cutting.

[The above report gives some idea of the possibility of the earth "yielding her increase," during the "times of restitution of all things." Acts 3: 21. Surely, "the desert shall blossom as the rose." Isa. 35.]

The serene, silent beauty of a holy life is the most Powerful influence in the world, next to the might of God. — Pascal.

Chronology and Bible Prophecy.

WHILE the development of the great Divine Plan of the Ages proceeds and the Bible shines brighter and brighter, and prophecy is fulfilled before our eyes, there are many who seem unable to appreciate the clearer light, because of being wedded to views which they have accepted from writings, the author of which they seem to think of as having been divinely inspired.

It would seem to be the Lord's purpose not to use infallible minds to interpret His Word, for His people are granted a measure of the holy spirit and this is to guide them into all truth, as it becomes due to be understood. The promise is that in these last days, "the days of the son of man," at the Second Advent, that servant who would be found faithful would receive the light upon truths clue and feast upon the good things provided by the present Lord and be used to dispense the same good things to others. However, we are all so fallible, all so prone to allow our zeal and earnestness to expect more at a given time than is warranted by the Word. Even our late Brother Russell, so rightly highly esteemed and loved by those who knew him, was no exception to this. His expectations respecting 1914 seemed very reasonable and most of the readers of his studies thought with him in most of those expectations, while they were still prospective.

It is much easier to look back and see where the mistake has been, than it was to find a fault at the time when every feature of prophecy he dealt with seemed so to corroborate the whole. What did happen at 1914-16 was that the "Times of the gentiles" ended. In Luke 21: 24, our Lord said—"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the gentiles until the times of 'the gentiles be fulfilled.'" That surely indicated a definite period, for the punishment upon the Jews. Since then, the oppression of the Jews in Palestine has ceased, Jerusalem is no longer 'trodden down,' but is being built up and revived. In fact, the "fig tree" that had been cursed and withered away at the end of the Jewish Age is again "budding." "When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh" (Matt. 24:32-34; Luke 21 ; 29-31).

The evidences of the revival in Palestine may be read from time to time in our daily papers, cities have sprung up and are prospering, and not only products of the land but manufactured goods are being exported. Wonderful developments are taking place, great undertakings entered upon, and colleges and other institutions are being built. During thousands of years the great wealth of the Dead Sea has lain there untouched, as though reserved to be discovered and developed at the right time. to provide the means 'of rejuvenating the land and gathering the ancient people of God back to the home of their fathers. Surely we have reached the time (the end of the. Gentile times) when we may sound forth -Isaiah's beautiful message, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double (punishment adequate to her offences) for all her sins." How numerous and beautiful are the songs of Isaiah regarding this return of Divine favour upon Israel. (Isaiah 60; 61; 62; etc.):

Some may say, "How can the Gentile times be ended and the Lord's Kingdom not yet established on earth?" But the question then arises, where did we get the thought from that Christ's Millennial reign would begin immediately at the end of these times of punishment on Israel ? It does not seem to be so stated in the Scriptures. The great image of Gentile powers, in Daniel 2, evidently goes a little beyond the time when Israel's times of punishment end. The great image was complete from the head of gold to the clay and iron toes, but the destruction awaits the completion of the Church, the Body of Christ, "Thou rawest until a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands which smote the image upon his feet and brake them in pieces." There is no reason to think that as soon as Israel's seven times of punishment under Gentile rule would end, the Church should have been glorified and be in position to brake in pieces as a potter's vessel the corrupt rule of the nations.

It would seem clear then that the Gentile times were fulfilled in 1914-1916, but the “stone” is not yet ready to become the great and glorious kingdom of righteousness and peace. The fact that this prophecy of “Gentile Times” has reached its fulfilment, being a period of 2520 years, corroborates the date of 600 or 604 B.C. as the beginning of the times of punishment upon Israel.

B.C. 606 or 604 was the date of the subjugation of all that remained of Israel under King Jehoiakim by Nebuchadnezzar. There, 70 years captivity began, which ended in 536 B.C., the first year of Cyrus, who gave decree that the captives might return, and command to build the Temple (Ezra V: 2, 3). The 70 years desolation of the land began 1.9 years later, when Zedekiah was dethroned because he broke his vow of loyalty to the King of Babylon. That was in 587 B.C. That the 70 years desolation did not begin earlier may be seen from the fact that Jeremiah during Zedekiah’s reign was foretelling the event (Jer. 7: 34).

It might, apart from the passage in Daniel 9: 25, have seemed that immediately the 70 years desolation ended, the 70 Sabbaths, or 70 weeks, would begin to count, but the message to Daniel seems to be given specially to guard against such conclusion. Then, too, the accounts of Ezra, and particularly Nehemiah, appear to be supplied so that the time to begin to count the 70 weeks might be noted. It was to be “from the time of the going forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem.” This command was given as recorded in Nehemiah 2; in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which was 454 B.C.

“Those who claim that the first year of Cyrus was 454 B.C. cannot make it accord with the ending-,,,of the Gentile times and, therefore, labor to obliterate such a period and claim that the “7 times” in .Leviticus simply means 7 strokes more. Poor Israel has, however, suffered many more than 7 strokes. Besides, there is the mention of 7 times as a period in Daniel, which clearly refers to 2520 years, just as the 3-1 times in Revelation refers to 1260 years, or 42 months, or 31 years of days, equal 1260 days, a day standing for a year.

Some seem to think Chronology a vital matter to the Christian, but that does not appear to be the case. None of the time prophecies concerning and fulfilled in this “end of the age” are dependent upon Bible chronology. In fact it would seem that the Lord has kept the matter hidden, may be for the reason that there is strong evidence that at the end of 6000 years the great Sabbath of 1000 years—the 7th 1000 year day will begin. Christ is to reign during that time, also the Church is promised to reign with Him 1000 years, and Satan is to be restrained during that same time.

The fact that we have not yet reached 6000 years of human history of sin and death does not mean that we are not living “in the days of the Son of Man.” There are those who seem to have formed the opinion that Christ would. not be present until His Millennial reign was due to begin. The Lord’s own teachings are contrary to this thought. He speaks of coming to conduct a Harvest work, He speaks of a work to be done among His people still in the flesh. He says the “Harvest is the end of the age,”—not the beginning of the next age. He speaks of “the days of the Son of Man,” during

which the world, and the religious systems, would be acting (just as • they are today), “as in the days of Noah,” before the flood.

We have thought of the period of Harvest as .being 40 years, but that has been a mistake, and we remember that when the first “world” passed away with the flood, it was after 120 years probation (Gen. 6:3), and it was to that period the Lord referred, as did also the Apostle Peter. It seems reasonable to suppose that the passing away of so much -greater a dispensation, covering 4000 years, should have a probationary period at least as long as was granted the few people on the earth in the days of Noah. The present great change involves not only the end of the “present evil world,” or 2nd dispensation, but also the ending of the Gospel Age, which has been for the selection of the Church class.

The question now arises can we locate the time when the “days of the •Son of Man” began. We had thought that 1874 was the date, that being the end of Daniel’s 1335 days. We suggest that that was not the date of our Lord’s arrival, but rather the time when He had prepared the great feast of truths promised in Luke 12: 37, and that He had been present for some years, in fact, ever since the parable of the 10 Virgins began to have its fulfilment, and which Brother Russell taught as being connected with the Millerite movement.

Some time ago, without any reference to this question, it was pointed out by some one that the Verses in Daniel 12 were out of order. Read as in the usual order nothing seemed to be indicated as going to happen at the end of the 1290 days, but if we read the verses in the following order,-5, 6, 7, 8, 9, .10, 11, 1, 12, 4, 3, 2, 13, we see that at the end of the 1290 days (verse 11), Michael is to “stand up” (verse 1). From this it would appear that the second presence or “days of the Son of Man” dates from about the Millerite movement (about 1829). If this is a correct understanding, then the 120 years of probation and the end of the present evil world should be reached about 1949. As Noah and his family entered the ark some days before the flood, so the Church’s deliverance and glorification will probably precede the climax of trouble by some years. The ark was certainly a figure of Christ (1 Pet. 3: 20, 21).

There are other instances where verses in the Bible have got out of place. Rotherham suggests it in Psalm 51; and, no doubt, Matt. 24: 28 ought to be after verse 41, as will be seen by comparing Luke 17: 34-37.

Some speak of the failure of 1914. There was no failure regarding anything that “was written” in the Word; we had jumped to certain conclusions beyond what was written. Since then events and conditions continue to help to a clearer understanding of revelation.

After all, while such matter is helpful and encouraging to the “watchers,” yet the most vital matter is for us to be prepared in heart and mind to enter the “Ark,” to be changed into the glorious likeness of our Lord, to enter upon the happy work of the kingdom, breaking in pieces the systems of error and delusion and bringing the great times of refreshing and blessing to the poor groaning creation (Rom. 8: 19-22).

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