

[R650 : page 4]

HO, EVERY ONE THAT THIRSTETH!

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." – Isa. 55:1.

In all of God's dealings with his creatures, one principle is marked and prominent, and that is the dignity with which he maintains his own prerogatives while granting freedom to his creatures, in the exercise of their God-given powers. Thus having made man in his own likeness – with reason, will, judgment, etc. – he does not afterward deface or ignore that image, but, on the contrary, he honors it.

God never demands of man a course of action out of harmony with his reason, at the sacrifice of his judgment, and in opposition to his will; but in every case he satisfies reason, appeals to the judgment, and leaves the decision subject to a free will, enlightened by an understanding of the inevitable final results in either case. He sets before us inducements or rewards to righteousness, and punishments for unrighteousness, but does not compel either course. With dignity and patience he awaits a sufficient time for our enlightened decision, and then carries out his own purpose with reference to us, in the event of that decision.

In accordance with this principle, is the above invitation through the Prophet Isaiah – "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (truth). Water is unwelcome except to the thirsty, and food produces loathing if forced upon one who is not hungry; so truth is obnoxious to those who prefer error. Therefore, God only gives his good things where they are desired, and never compels the acceptance of his favors. But blessed is the man that hungereth and thirsteth, for his soul shall be satisfied through the Divine bounty.

"Ah!" say some anxious Christians, "but there are so many who have no thirst whatever for the truth, and if we don't compel

them to hear and accept it we fear they will never get it;" and so they attempt to force the truth upon them at unseasonable times and in obtrusive ways, and sometimes the anxiety to enforce one truth, or supposed truth, leads to a sacrifice and darkening of other truth. But the result is always the same – more harm than good. A loathing of truth is generally the result.

It will relieve such of much anxiety to call to mind what they have recently learned – that God's plan is so broad and generous that its gracious provisions cover all the interests of every creature. None are so small, or so degraded, or so mean, as to be left out. If at present they are so filled with the husks of human traditions, and the muddy waters of human philosophy, there is little use in trying to fill them with anything better. By and by (in the time of trouble) God will furnish them such an emetic that thereafter they will be prepared to receive the truth in its purity and in the love of it. It matters not, as we now clearly see, even if death should intervene, for all shall be brought to a knowledge of the truth under the favorable circumstances of the millennial reign of Christ, and have full opportunity to secure everlasting life.

While we may thus rest in faith upon the sure promises of God with reference to these, it is our privilege to herald the blessed invitation – "Ho, every one THAT THIRSTETH, come ye to the waters." And if they will not come, let them stay away until they are ready to come. In time they will be thirsty enough. A similar invitation is repeated in Rev. 22:17, as applying during the millennial age, after the espoused virgin church **[R651 : page 4]** has become the Bride of Christ – "Whosoever will [do not compel, but] LET HIM take the water of life freely."

God does not now compel any to accept his great favor to be made the bride of Christ, neither in the age to come will he compel any to accept the favor of everlasting life. But, if when it is offered,

they will have it, O, how freely they may have it – "He that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat... without money and without price."

With a full conviction of the love and bountiful provision of God's plan for all mankind, Jesus could, during his ministry, ignore the Gentiles, and devote all his energies to Israel, and particularly to those among them who were anxious to know the truth; and he could tell his disciples to begin at Jerusalem and not to enter into any city of the Samaritans until first the Gospel had been proclaimed to Israel. So now, with equal composure and trust, we can devote ourselves to the work of the present, and carry no care about that part of God's work which lies beyond the present.

Wherever we find a thirsty, hungry soul, a hearing ear, and a meek and quiet spirit, there is our work. The harvest work (in which time we are living) is to seek out and minister to the necessities of such; and it is a work in which the humblest saint may engage. The few or many talents may be carefully utilized. But the love of God must be not only the constraining motive of him who would bear the glad tidings, but it must also be the constraining incentive presented to those whom we would have to receive God's favors. All God's blessings are favors, and will never be forced upon his creatures.

A zeal according to knowledge, will therefore never resort to those unreasonable and undignified proceedings which make religion a by-word, and bring upon the cause of Christ reproach. There is nothing in the religion of Jesus Christ which is out of harmony with the soundest reason and the most refined judgment. Its methods, according to the Scriptures, are not with sounding brass and tinkling cymbals; with extravagant words and actions that bring the children of God down to the level of those they seek to reach; no, its methods are as dignified, ennobling and elevating as are the precious truths it bears. And both the truth and the truth-bearer, who

follows in the Master's footsteps, will command the reverence, even though they incur the persecution of men.

Of Jesus it was said: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." (Isa. 42:2.) We are not heard, either by God or men, for our much speaking (Matt. 6:7); therefore let us endeavor to present God's truth in all its native simplicity and beauty, and trust its inherent power to win its way in due time to every heart.

"Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us"; therefore, as his faithful servants we should specially study and conform to his methods.

MRS. C. T. R.

[R656 : page 4]

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks."
