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"COME OUT OF HER!"

Auburn, Ills., April 25th, '87.

DEAR MRS. RUSSELL: – Pardon me for troubling you so soon again. I am so very much *alone* in the world, because of my *peculiar* belief, that I find it a relief to open my heart to you. I wish I could make you realize the change that has come over me regarding worldly affairs, since I have taken the liberty to think for myself. I was first impressed with these newly discovered ideas regarding the teaching of God's Word, in the fall of 1881. I grasped the central idea, the Atonement, from the first; also the Restitution of all things, through justification. These central points seem to me as clear as the noon-day. Some other points, and in comparison to these, minor ones I should say, such as the Trinity – the exact state of the being after death, the Communion, Baptism (the outward symbol and its correct form), and the Law touching the keeping of the Sabbath – these four questions have caused doubts and arguments for and against, to harbor within my mind. In regard to "the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3:18-20): Does this not teach that Christ, during his stay in the tomb, went in spirit to the spirits in prison? In regard to Baptism: It appears to me unimportant as to the *form*. It also appears immaterial, whether the person baptized be an infant or an adult. Children are bidden to come to Christ. And they are readier to believe and to love a Savior, than older ones. I feel that it is right to bring God's children to his altar, leaving them in the care of the Spirit. I feel that no time should be lost in putting them into his care. I feel deeply upon this subject, because I wish to do what is right.

Though I keep every day holy to God, yet, to be conscientious, I must keep one special day.

Perhaps now you will say, I have not truly been begotten of the Spirit. Dear Sister, I can echo your fears upon this subject. And that brings me to the principal part of my trouble. My life is one of small

trials and vexations. Like Mary I have chosen the better part, but I am a veritable Martha, though indeed with all the aspirations and ideas and longings of a Mary. That is, I am so surrounded with worldly anxieties and petty cares – having the care of my family, trying to make ends meet and working from morning till night, with miserable health continually, which of itself is a cause of nervousness and fretfulness. Do you wonder I doubt my own position in the Plan of the Ages? I do not *presume* to know where I stand in this matter – whether upon the spiritual or human plane. But I can say, with a conscience void of intentional, wilful offence, that I shall be grateful, if I may be accounted worthy even to be a doorkeeper in the house of our God.

In my present circumstances I am unable to take a stand even as a Christian, unless I attend a nominal church. My mother is a staunch Episcopalian. She is determined I shall either be a "somebody" in the Church, or a "nobody" out of it. She has influence. This is my position here. I speak not against my mother – all honor be to that sacred name! I only mention the fact, that you may see how I am placed.

Now, what is my duty? Can I do more good in my peculiar position, by going with my mother, thus making manifest my interest in religion and introducing my own views, as I see opportunity – or shall I continue as at present – in obscurity, almost absolute seclusion from society, for the sake of my principles? I am perfectly willing to do so – if it is right.

I have made no secret of my way of thinking; nor can I. My nature is too frank and open to admit of that. Hence the estrangement between myself and every one. But is this as it ought to be? I know I must suffer persecution, and gladly have done so – yet I may be standing in the light of others, if I cannot see plainly myself. I fear, I have not made myself plain. I will try and send some money soon – for O! I want this work to go forward! My husband and myself took Communion this year by ourselves, and it seemed a blessed season. I remain Yours lovingly,

MRS. S_____.

REPLY.

MRS. S_____, MY DEAR SISTER: – Your esteemed favor of the 25th April is at hand and be assured that in your questionings and fears I fully sympathize with you. I do not look upon them however as evidence of any lack of consecration to God, or that you are not begotten of the Spirit. They come only as the result of an imperfect understanding of God's great comprehensive plan.

What you need, then, is to take plenty of time, and with patient carefulness and a meek and teachable spirit which is intent on knowing and doing God's will only, to study his great plan of the ages. Keep well in mind its deep foundation – its complete satisfaction of the demands of justice in our redemption through the precious blood of Christ; its righteous principles recognizing God's absolute and universal sovereignty and man's individual free agency; and then mark the wonderful scope of the plan – so far reaching in its grand results as to affect all creatures "in heaven and in earth," to establish once and forever the absolute authority of God in all the universe, and to establish all his creatures in righteousness and joyful and loving obedience.

Seeing that such is the wondrous scope of the divine plan, we should not be surprised to learn that it requires 7,000 years for its development – the 6,000 past and 1,000 future. The plan will have reached its culmination when Christ gives up the kingdom to the Father at the end of his millennial reign. Taking this grand view of the subject, many otherwise troublesome questions will settle themselves; for instance your anxiety for your children and your responsibility as a mother. God says: "All souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son *is mine*" (Ezek. 18:4). God does not leave the eternal destiny of a single soul to the faithfulness of father or mother, or pastor or teacher, or any one. They are all his; he knows them every one individually, and every **[R944 : page 6]** phase of their character and

disposition, and all their surrounding circumstances from earliest infancy. And each one of these individuals must stand on trial *for himself*: their eternal destiny, whether it be life everlasting in its glory and perfection, [R945 : page 6] or death – the blotting out of existence (Job 10:19; 7:21; 14:21.) must be decided by *each for himself*, when brought to a full knowledge of the truth – the plan of redemption and reconciliation accomplished through Christ. God himself has made full and complete arrangements for the eternal welfare and blessedness and glory of every individual, who will appreciate and submit to his authority. And he has also made arrangements for the discipline so necessary to their development and final perfecting. Where then, you ask, is a mother's responsibilities? It is simply this: In view of your greater influence over the child, your *opportunity*, and THEREFORE responsibility to God, for the right use of that influence, is greater than that of any other person. We are each accountable to God for the right use of whatever talents and opportunities *we have*, and no more. If you have naturally good judgment and make good use of it in training your children to righteousness and obedience to God, you will not only receive the divine approval, but without doubt you will see at least some of the good effects of your training in the present life, though your children will not reach *perfection*, until the better and effectual influences and agencies of the *next age* complete the work.

But if naturally you have poor judgment, and if much of your own life before your children, was spent out of harmony with God, so that the opportunities of the early years of your children's training were lost, and in consequence you now find it impossible to train them as you would, and you see them wandering from God and with no disposition to submit to either God's authority or yours, and though you try to do the best you can for them, your efforts all seem fruitless, still take courage: God says, "All souls are *mine*;" they are in his care whether you realize it, or have placed them there or not, and he will see that they get the discipline they need. He may in the present life let them run their course and see the result of their folly, though it be painful indeed to you, and then in the next age put on the brakes and check,

restrain, punish, and encourage, and help them, as his wisdom and love will see best, until their reform is thorough and complete, or they are adjudged incorrigible and cut off from life. The mistakes of injudicious parents will all be overruled under the discipline of Christ whom God hath appointed as Prophet, Priest and King for that very purpose.

As a mother do *the best you can* with your present knowledge and ability and dismiss all anxiety, casting your burden upon the Lord, who *is able* to sustain you, and to make all things work together for the accomplishment of his purposes – "in due time." God only holds us accountable to the extent of our ability and opportunity since we became his children; all our sins and short-comings, previous to that time, having been freely forgiven for Christ's sake.

Now about giving your children to God: They are not yours to give; they are his already – "All souls are mine." But it is your privilege at the very dawn of their existence to recognize God's right and authority over them whom he redeemed by the gift of his Son, and to ask for wisdom to so train them that they may early learn to love and obey him and to recognize his love manifested through Christ. But what has baptism to do with this? Nothing at all. Study carefully the subject of baptism as presented in TOWER of Oct. '84. The sprinkling of babes is entirely out of harmony with the significance of either John's baptism or Christ's.

And again, Our Lord did not institute any ordinance in the Church to be practiced in an indefinite, haphazard way. Both the ordinances and the *only* ones which he did establish were very simple and clearly defined, both in form and in significance, and it will not do for Christians to say, I am not quite sure what they mean and how they are to be performed, because there is difference in men's opinions about them. There is no necessity for difference of opinion when the Scriptures are plain and explicit. And it is our business to *make sure* of what the Scriptures teach, and then to follow their directions, though a thousand *opinions* prevail to the contrary.

On the subject of the trinity (which is not a Bible subject) I would refer you to the TOWER of July '82, if I had it to send you. I presume you have no TOWERS so far back. I will suggest to Mr. R. however that he republish that article for the benefit of yourself and others. It would not be possible to satisfactorily canvass the subject in a letter; but if you study carefully Chap. X. of M. DAWN you will see that the common view is unscriptural and unreasonable.

On the other subjects I would refer you to the following articles: "The Spirits in Prison" in TOWER of Dec. '84, "The Ten Commandments" Oct. '83, "Sunday and The Law" Dec. '85, and recent articles relating to "The Lord's Supper."

With reference to going back into the Nominal Church your duty is clear if you are of the class designated "*My People*" in Rev. 18:4. You know that it is Babylon. Its Babel, confusion, mixture, is manifest even to the world. You were called out of her that you might not be a sharer of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. Her sins are those of conformity to the opinions and ideas and manners and customs of the world irrespective of God's will, and also the rejection of his truth to an increasing extent. If you return to Babylon and give that system the support of your influence in permitting your name to swell the list of its membership, or your money to support and extend it financially, or your presence to encourage its teachers in proclaiming as gospel that which is not gospel, then you are partaking of its sins and must share in its plagues. Your mother's wishes or the opinions of your friends should not have a feather's weight with you when God speaks – and remember he does not speak to us by mere impressions or imaginations, but plainly and unmistakably by his Word. He has shown you Babylon's confusion. You know that you are in it. And now he says, "Come out of her *my people*" etc. You need to remember that you belong *to God*, and while you love and honor your mother for her care and good influence in your youthful days, neither she, nor any one else must now be permitted to come between you and your God. And should your fidelity separate you from every earthly tie, rejoice that it links

you closer to the throne of God. Consider it a privilege to be a "nobody" for Christ's sake and let others see by your cheerfulness that you *enjoy* the privilege. Perhaps after all as you *decidedly* wear his yoke you will find that his yoke is easy and his burden light, being lightened by the love you bear with it.

Now take courage dear sister – walk in the light, obey the truth as fast as you see it and study the plan of God with care, that you may be firmly established – rooted and grounded in the faith. Yours in Christian love,

MRS. C. T. RUSSELL.

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