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## "OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD."

THE following was written to a Brother who, having engaged in the Colporteur Work, was discouraged and stopped by being told by some that his work was doing harm – disintegrating churches, arousing questions disconcerting to ministers, etc., and that in some cases some who believed seemed if anything more careless than ever of religious matters. The Brother stopped his labors, and then wrote to us explaining his course.

However, after writing to us and before our reply reached him, he sat down to re-study the DAWN, and not only convinced himself of its Scripturalness, but got his zeal again enkindled, wrote to us accordingly and resumed his labors as a Colporteur. We publish the letter now in hope that it may benefit others who may be similarly beset by the Adversary.

Dear Brother: – Your letter, just at hand, was, as you surmised it would be, a complete surprise. I knew that the Enemy had tempted you severely on the other side of the question – to believe in universal, everlasting salvation – but I had not supposed you in any danger from the quarter from whence your besetment has so quickly come.

Again, as I sometimes wonder why those who go into Universalism and begin to think they believe it, do not see *first* what CAN BE SAID AGAINST THAT VIEW, before they jump at an immature conclusion and do injury to others, as well as to themselves, so now I wonder in your case. Would it not have been better to have stopped work for a week: to have written me candidly of your perplexity and asked a reply – if one could be given – to your objections? I believe that you will agree that such would have been a *better* course.

Even now, you do not ask, nor even hint, your willingness to consider what can be said upon the other side of this question. And modesty, and a dislike to intrude where not invited, naturally cause me to hesitate in offering counsel not sought. But I banish this; and, considering myself merely as the Lord's servant and as your brother (and as to some extent my brother's keeper, whether he ask aid or not), I will now proceed as though you had asked my assistance, or the Lord's aid through me, in the answer of your perplexities, as follows:

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### **"LIGHT IS SOWN FOR THE RIGHTEOUS."**

— *PSA. 97:11.* —

How anyone can read MILLENNIAL DAWN, and reach the conclusion that it favors the everlasting salvation of all mankind, is more than I can comprehend. It does point out a universal redemption from the curse (Rom. 5:19; 1 Tim. 2:4-6); but, with equal clearness, it points out that this redemption merely secures, to all under the New Covenant, an opportunity for attesting their love of righteousness and its peaceable fruits, and their hatred of sin and its baneful results. It shows that as a *ransom* was necessary to man's recovery from the Adamic condemnation, so, if all or any were tried and individually found unworthy of life, it would require *another ransom for each one* before he could be restored or tried again, and that God has made no such provision, but calls the second death "*everlasting destruction.*"

It is not surprising, either, that, when the two-edged sword of truth enters, it creates a division. This is one evidence that we are now in the harvest, and that this truth is the harvest sickle. So it was at the first advent. Wherever our Lord and the apostles and their message went, there was a division of the people concerning him: so much so, that in one place "they entreated him that he would depart out of their coasts." (Matt. 8:34; Mark 1:24; Acts 13:50.) What did our Lord do, — change his gospel to suit them? No: he continued his work, until the whole

city was in an uproar and the order-loving scribes and Pharisees had him executed, saying that it was expedient that one die for the (good of) the people, that all might not perish. – John 11:49-53.

Wherever the truth goes it has such an effect. The heathen nations all claim that it disturbs the spirit of their devotions and distracts the [R1633 : page 90] reverence formerly paid to Brahm and Buddha. The effect was the same in the days of the apostles (Acts 13:50.) Paul and Barnabas were arrested for disturbing the peace and unsettling the minds of those who worshiped the goddess Diana; and "the whole city was in an uproar." (Acts 19:40; 20:1; 21:31.) But the apostles, instead of wavering and stopping, went right along and preached the same gospel which made a disturbance everywhere. It became so notorious, that the knowledge of it spread from city to city, in times when they had neither mail routes nor telegraph lines; so that it was declared at Thessalonica, "These who have *turned the world upside down* are come hither also." – Acts 17:5,6.

The difference between now and formerly is that then some were in the formalism of Phariseeism and the bondage of the law, others under the bondage of philosophy, and some others to Dianaism, and like fallacies; while now, some are deluded by Roman Catholicism, some by Universalism, some by Unitarianism, some by Methodism, some by Presbyterianism, and some by Know-nothing-ism. Like children, some asleep and some at innocent play, it seems perhaps at first a pity to disturb them, even to give them God's message. But as sleep must be disturbed and plays broken, in order to prepare the children for school, so the various groups of larger children (Presbyterian, Methodist, Roman Catholic, etc.) must now be awakened, called from present diversions and prepared for the great examination that is to come to all in this evil day. (1 Pet. 4:12.) What if it does cause a commotion as with the children, showing some to be bad-mannered, others disobedient and wilful. It is, nevertheless, the right and only thing to do, if we are guided by the Word of the Lord. They that can interest and awe each other with accounts of

their *dreams* and nightmares, may be vexed beyond measure by the telling of the simple truth of God's gospel; but the Lord nevertheless says – "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; but he that hath *my Word* let him speak [only] my Word faithfully." (Jer. 23:28.) Blessed those faithful servants whom the Lord, at his arrival, shall find so doing – giving the meat which is in due season to the household of faith.

Our gospel is of necessity to some a savor of life unto life, and to others of death unto death; and who is sufficient for such things – to bear such a message?

As it was in the days of the apostles, so it is now: some held by fear are moderate, and outwardly may have a form of godliness, who, when the shackles of fear are removed, manifest their real preference to be for sin and its fruits, rather than for righteousness, peace and joy in the holy spirit. We regret this; so did the apostles regret this side of the question in their day; saying, "We beseech you that you receive not the grace of God *in vain*." (2 Cor. 6:1.) But did they stop preaching because they found that some were disposed to take advantage of God's mercy and goodness to continue in sin? Surely not: they declared that they knew beforehand that such would be the effect of the truth – to some it would become "a savor of life unto life [everlastingly]," and to others "a savor of death unto death [everlasting]." They felt their insufficiency for such responsibility as this implied, but concluded that their sufficiency rested in God, who had qualified them as ministers and sent them forth.

So now, when we learn that any become careless or plunge into sin, after learning that God is love, and that he will not torment sinners to all eternity, but that evil-doers shall be cut off, and that provision has been made for the recovery of all who will return to God in penitence, we regret it and feel as the Apostle expressed himself of some in his day: It had been better that they had not known the way of righteousness, than that, after having learned it, they should sin, and,

like the sow, return to their wallowing in the mire. (2 Pet. 2:21,22.) But this should not hinder us from preaching the truth; for, like the apostles, we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but realize it to be *the power* of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. We know how it has sanctified our hearts, as fear or error or nothing else ever did. We know of many others to whom it has been [R1634 : page 90] God's power to lift them out of Infidelity and [R1634 : page 91] sin into faith and righteousness, when nothing else could have so helped them.

Then, too, we remember that this is the time for thrusting in the sickle and separating the wheat from the tares. If some we had supposed *wheat* prove to be tares, when brought to the test which God now sends, that is no fault of ours. The sickle we use is *his* sickle – his truth. He is responsible, and will see that all the *wheat* is gathered into the garner, and that none of the multitude of tares get there, even though we, mistaking them for wheat, should feel for a time disappointed. The truth is testing and proving what we are – wheat or tares.

God seeketh not always what man seeketh. God seeketh only such as worship him in the spirit of the truth; and seeketh not, and will not have, amongst his elect, such as merely worship him in error under the bondage of fear. He is now testing his people.

We have seen that the effect of the truth in the hands of the Lord and the apostles was the same as it is now – to make division, and to prove unworthy those who received it in vain – whose lives were not thereby brought more into harmony with God. Why has it not been so down through the Gospel age? How was it that for a long time there was so much *unity* and peace, until the Reformation period? and how is it that of late years there has been so much peace in the nominal church?

We answer: because the church about the second century began to lose the *truth*, and took instead much error. Therefore the fear and

superstition brought quiet submission to the error, and permitted her to slumber and divert herself with forms, etc., during the period known in history as "the dark ages." But just as soon as the Word of God began to be heard again, in the days of the Reformation, the trouble and division began. And it continued until the doctrines of the Scriptures began to be lost sight of again in unions and harmonies based upon the errors of men, – fear, etc.

But now the Millennial morning is here, and all must be awaked; for a great and dark hour (a night) of unbelief approaches, in which all will be tested. If some on being awakened receive the *grace* of God *in vain*, we cannot stop for them. They would reach the same results later on anyway. We must awaken and enthuse the real *saints of God*, whom we are commissioned to "seal in their foreheads" and "gather unto *him*," out of sectarian bondage and error, from the four quarters of heaven.

"Let the dead bury their dead: Go, thou, and preach the gospel!"

Very truly, your brother and servant,

C. T. RUSSELL.

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