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## ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS.

DEAR BRO. RUSSELL: – I read with interest your article, "The prize set before us," in TOWER of July 1st, '94. There are still features of it, however, which are not clearly seen. It is obvious that God's requirements of obedience are the same in all ages, whatever the reward may be, whether the earthly or the heavenly; but the immortality that was "brought to light in the gospel" has not been understood during the last eighteen hundred years as we now understand it. Many who gave their lives in the service of the Master were believers in the innate immortality of man, and expected at death to be translated and be as the angels. Not dreaming of the high privilege of being made partakers of the divine nature, they did not comprehend the philosophy of surrendering the human in order to obtain the divine, yet virtually did give their lives in his service as they understood service, though really propagating the errors (as we now see) of immortality, hell fire, etc. The question is, did God overlook these errors and reckon their intentions as acceptable? and will he grant to them that which they never expected?

[REPLY. – Let us reason out our answer, carefully guarding every conclusion by the teachings of the inspired Scriptures, that our conclusions be not merely our own judgment, but the mind of God on the subject.

(1) Justification, by faith in Christ as Redeemer, was indispensable then as it is now. Whether or not the *philosophy* of the ransom was clearly seen in all its details then or now is not the question; but whether or not the FACT *is accepted*, that we are fallen from divine favor into sin and under its penalty, death, and that the death of our Lord as our ransom-price brings forgiveness and reconciliation to all who believe that *fact* and strive to forsake sin. [R1782 : page 63]

(2) God's will for his believing people justified by faith in the ransom is still, and always has been, the same, as the Apostle stated it; viz., "This is the will of God concerning you, even your *sanctification*."

(3) To produce this *sanctification in believers* God has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, and declares that it is the *truth of his Word* that is to produce the sanctification of character which is acceptable to him.

(4) The question then is, Did God's people of the past have a *sufficiency of the truth* to produce sanctification of character, acceptable to God?

We answer that the sanctification required by the Lord's call in this age is that *we be conformed* to the image of his Son, our Redeemer. We have reason to believe that some all the way along these past eighteen centuries have attained to this requirement, and hence have been acceptable with God. They did not *need* as much truth to sanctify them as they would require if they lived in the present time, when the world, the flesh and the devil are quickened by knowledge and selfishness into such activity as was never before known. Ah! it requires a great deal of truth to stand firmly as a soldier of the cross to-day, when Satan is spreading snares and traps through "higher criticism," falsely so-called; for it is lower criticism from such as are mentioned by the Apostle as blind and unable to see afar off since they have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins – from Adamic condemnation – and instead have reached the conclusion that man's fall has been upward and that hence he needs no redemption with the precious blood of Christ. – 1 Cor. 1:18-20; 2:6-12.

(5) Therefore the amount of truth now needed and supplied to God's household, and *necessary* to their sanctification and protection from the foretold "scoffers" of the end of this age, who even deny that the Lord *bought* them (2 Pet. 2:1), is much more than was necessary or

provided to those in former times equally dear to God, and equally acceptable in sanctified character.

(6) As the apostles declared, the peculiar trials of the end of this age necessitate the whole armor of God that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished. And now to be in darkness, in ignorance of the divine plan, would not only mean that we are exposed to attack and liable to fall, but furthermore, it would imply that we are not of the "brethren" who it is declared will not be in darkness now, and that we are not of the "household of faith" which it is declared will now be specially fed with "meat in due season" – "things new and old."]

Another question: Those who in their lifetime consecrated their lives to God, but who, owing to infirmities or environments, were never able to comply fully with their consecration, – by what fires are they to be purified? or will they simply drop back to the earthly plane (I speak of those of the past)? or shall they go into the land of silence? or what? It is hard for me to see how these two classes [the "little flock" of overcomers and the "great company"] have been forming all along during the age since the first advent, without the knowledge necessary to fit them for either. If you deem it profitable to the "little flock" to give us through the TOWER an explanation of the way the Lord has been perfecting these classes before the present light was seen, please do so.

[REPLY. – The latter part of this question we will consider answered with the previous one; the former part we will now consider.

It seems to us that any who have *no* opportunity for suffering with Christ or rendering service cannot be of those "called;" for the terms are distinctly stated in the inspired Word, – If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with him; the *sufferings* of this present time *work out for us* a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Tim. 2:12; 2 Cor. 4:17); we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, *if so be* that we *suffer* with him, that we may also be glorified together (Rom. 8:17); and as "the spirit testifies beforehand, the

sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," and as in our Lord's case it was needful that he should suffer before entering his glory, so those whom he redeemed and then called to be his joint-heirs must be "partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." – 1 Pet. 1:11; Acts 17:13; 1 Pet. 4:13.

These sufferings are not such as are common to humanity – sickness, etc., incidental to sin and its penalty death – but sufferings *for Christ's sake*, which means activity in Christ's *service*. Whoever, therefore, can find *no opportunity* [R1783 : page 63] to render service to Christ and to suffer something of self-denial, etc., in that service, has no opportunity for making a calling and election sure, and hence may consider himself as not being one of those "called" to suffer and afterward to reign.

But having drawn these lines sharply, according to the apostolic copy, let us note for a moment how many opportunities are afforded us for service and suffering. All may not suffer in exactly the same way, nor for the same cause, although it be still for God's cause. The Apostle shows this, saying, "Ye endured a great fight of afflictions, partly whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used."

Who can not suffer in one or the other of these ways, *if he be willing?* If he have the ability and opportunity and will use them in the direct service of the truth – either by telling the gospel orally or by circulating the message in printed form or by writing of it to his friends, he will surely bring upon himself the disfavor of neighbors and friends, and persecution open or secret. He will *suffer* for his faithfulness even though he "suffer *joyfully*." If he have no ability as a public speaker, or a private talker, if he cannot write, if he be lame or sick, so as to be unable to circulate the printed page, he can at least share the reproaches of the truth by declaring himself the friend of the Lord and of those soldiers of the cross who are publishing the truth and being reviled

therefor. Thus, at very least, *all* can suffer who will, and all will suffer who have been begotten of the truth [R1783 : page 64] and are not ashamed of the Lord, the brethren and the truth. And he that is ashamed is not fit for the Kingdom.

However, let our service and suffering be according to wisdom and love – to as good purpose as possible. In our services we should be careful not to interfere with the liberties of others. "Let none of you suffer as a busybody in other men's matters." And let us also be careful not to make our sufferings subjects for boasting, as though seeking the praise of men, or of continual complainings to other members who are themselves perhaps suffering more acutely. If we suffer, let it be *as unto the Lord*.

But perhaps the question is more respecting the ability to comply *fully*, than the ability to comply at all.

We answer, if we can comply at all (and we have shown that all can comply), then we *can comply fully*. It is not a question of, *Can* we comply? but of *Will* we comply? and only those who will and do will be classed as "overcomers" and win the great "prize of our high calling." Such as fail to go on to serve and to suffer in one of the ways specified by the Apostle (yet who do not "draw back" in the sense of repudiating the precious blood of Christ, nor in the sense of returning to "wilful sin" as "the sow that was washed to wallowing in the mire"), will be of the "great company"\* who will come up to life through great tribulation, and who will "suffer loss" – the loss of the Kingdom glory and divine nature. – 1 Cor. 3:15.]

\*Concerning these and the trouble through which they pass, see M. DAWN, VOL. I., and "TABERNACLE SHADOWS OF BETTER SACRIFICES," pp. 59-61.\*

A further inquiry: In your judgment, should a man be baptized into the *death* of Christ who is so related to his family and to society that his time is necessarily taken up with worldly duties and cares, and who

is consequently unable to do much harvest work, although if his own preferences were consulted and it were not for his family, he would much prefer to engage in harvest work? Has a man who has consecrated himself to his Father's business any right to engage in the ordinary duties of life? Can he do so and fulfill his baptismal vow?

Dear Brother, you can imagine how deeply I feel on this subject, when I tell you the case is my own. I have neglected baptism because I feared to take the vow lest I should fail to fulfill its obligations. Oh, that I knew the will of God concerning me! If you can help me into the light in this matter I shall be glad.

I send greeting to you and Sister Russell to whom I owe so much. May the Lord long spare you to feed the flock.

REPLY. – It is our selves, dear Brother, our hearts, our all (justified by our Redeemer's merit), that we present to the Lord in baptism. And it is this that God accepts. Whether therefore your all be little or very little, it is your *all* – all that you can render to the Lord, consistent with those obligations of life which he recognizes with approval. And amongst these are the duties of a husband and father, if you have such obligations when the truth reaches you. But *after* having consecrated himself to the Lord it would certainly be consistent for one to avoid all provisions for the flesh that would war against his own spiritual welfare or hinder his opportunities for spending his time and energy in the Lord's service, in accordance with his baptismal covenant.

Thus seen, God's requirements are a "reasonable service;" and we advise, dear Brother, that you enter it promptly and render such service as you can, earnestly, heartily, prayerfully; and if faithful in the little opportunities, no doubt God will open to you greater ones.]

Your humble brother who desires to do the Master's will,

W. A.

MY DEAR BRO. RUSSELL: – In your issue of TOWER of January 1st there is an article, "On Trial for Life," which has given me no little spiritual confusion. I write to see if you can extricate me from the same.

Do you mean to teach that the saint falling away now will receive the Second Death, so that he will have no chance with the balance of the world, in the incoming Millennium, for restoration to the perfect human nature? Brother G\_\_\_\_\_, of this place, one of the old time saints, as you know, says you do not so teach; but I have read the article again and again, and confess freely that I cannot understand you otherwise.

None of us are born of the spirit till we die – then we become partakers of the divine nature. If we fail in obtaining this prize, or the lower spiritual nature, then it seems to me that we ought, at least, to be given equal chance with the balance of the world. For instance, I am now fifty-five years of age, and have been a member of the Missionary Baptist church twenty-six years. Should I fail quite to reach the mark, or should I fail entirely in the spirit-begotten nature, then to be cut off from any chance, with the balance of the world, in the dispensation now being ushered in, of obtaining the state of perfect human nature, would not only not be Godlike, but it would be unreasonable. My position has been, that *only* those who hold out faithfully to the end are the truly regenerate.

Please explain this, my brother. [Perhaps the answer to the above letter will meet your case. – ED] I have learned many grand truths from your writings, for which I thank God and take courage. I remain sincerely yours, in the patience and tribulation of the saints, J. M. C.

DEAR BRO. RUSSELL: – Glad to see the TOWER out on Dress Parade. It looks nice. I fancy Babylon just over the hill under the dark sky being shaken and rent by the overruling elements and earthquakes

underneath. They cannot from there see the sun of righteousness that is visible only to those on Zion's Tower.

The saving of nickels since last remittance reaches only 80 cents to date, but I supply a sum to make the amount of \$2.00, herewith enclosed as "Good Hope" fund increase.

Regarding German Quarterly, I will pledge myself for twelve copies. I think it a good suggestion.

While it is yet day, we should deny ourselves all we can and do what we can to hasten the work of our Master. It is a blessed privilege, and for every such gift the true child of God receives a blessing even in this world, and, I believe, will receive a far greater blessing and reward in the Kingdom. Out of my little I mean to give yet more from this time forth, relying upon the One to help me who has so graciously fed me the past three years with the spiritual food in due season. I would that all people might read and receive from M. DAWNS the same rich blessing. Now I can love God as I never could have loved him before.

I am glad to say the Church here is a unit, in perfect harmony with its teachings of what saith the Scripture.

Yours in Christian love,

J. A. BOHNET.

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