

[R3836 : page 254]

"BLESSED ARE YOUR EARS, FOR THEY HEAR"

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

I have wished for a long time to tell you my own experience in coming into the Truth, but feared to trespass upon your valuable time. However, as my experience is (I hope) very different from that of most other people, I am going to tell it that you may know how marvellously I have been blessed of the Lord through his servant, Brother Russell, but in order to fully understand the extent of the blessing you must know of the rebellion that once possessed me.

I was born of Universalist parents and brought up in that faith, and at the age of fourteen I united with that Church. When I was fourteen years old I began to sing in a quartet choir in one of the churches in this city, and from that time until fifteen years ago, when I was compelled to give up my music on account of growing deafness, I was a member of a quartet choir in some Church in town. For the last eight years or so before I was obliged to give it up, I was a member of a local concert organization, whose services were in large demand for entertainments and public installations of the various secret orders, Masons, Odd Fellows, etc., and a great many other occasions, besides our regular concert work. During the few years we were associated together we furnished music at over 300 funerals. Taking it all together my music was a large part of my life, and my greatest pleasure outside my home.

I was during most of those years a teacher in the Universalist Sunday school, and one of the chief workers there; was always willing to do anything in my power to help in any good cause until my hearing utterly failed, when it seemed to me that I was of no further use to anyone or anything after that.

Soon after my 20th birthday I was married to one of the best of men, and it was about three years after our marriage that my hearing began to fail, gradually growing worse until about eight years ago, when I became stone deaf. Since that time I have been able to converse with people only when I have been able to "read their lips," or by writing or finger-spelling. So you see my husband has been a patient sharer of my **[R3836 : page 255]** affliction for twenty-seven years, during which time he has spent hundreds of dollars in having me try different so-called "cures for deafness."

We have one child, a daughter of almost sixteen years, but previous to her birth we had similar hopes three times – the little ones living but a few hours each. The loss of my babies, then the loss of my hearing, with all that implies, made me very bitter against our heavenly Father, and even caused me to doubt at times the very existence of such a being.

One day a few years ago, when a very dear old school-friend was visiting me, I was bemoaning my fate and she was trying to cheer and comfort me. Among other things she said, "It may be, Tena, that God has something better in store for you, and some time you will see that, although he has permitted this affliction to come upon you, it was in love, and may lead you to a still greater blessing." That aroused all my fiery indignation, and I replied, "I don't want any other blessing. I want those he has taken away! and don't you talk to **[R3837 : page 255]** me of the love of God! If there is such a being – which I sometimes doubt entirely – he has shown anything but love for me! He took away my babies as soon as they had breathed a few times. He has robbed me of my hearing and thus taken away my greatest pleasure in life, my music, etc., and at the same time raised a barrier between me and the world which I can never overcome. He has isolated me from all the world while still leaving me in it, and he would have shown more love for me if he had taken

me out of the world entirely; and all this he has done notwithstanding the fact that I have always been a worker in his Church and cause, have always praised him with my voice, was ever ready and willing to serve him with hand and voice in any good cause, and this is the way he shows his love for me! Oh, to me he seems a good God to be hated, but not one who is worthy of my love and confidence or reverence."

My friend, with tears rolling down her face, clasped me in her arms and said, "Poor child! I am so sorry for you. It does seem hard, but still I can't help feeling that the time will come when you will feel differently and see things in a better light."

Was ever anyone so wickedly rebellious as I? I continued to feel the same for years, during which time, on the rare occasions that we met, my friend would drop some word, principally concerning events which were likely to soon take place in the world's history, and about three years ago she sent me some tracts which I was tempted to at once throw into the waste basket; but it occurred to me that after she had taken the trouble to send them to me, the least I could do was to read them before destroying them. I did read them, and one of them at least I kept, thinking it might come handy to refer to. So I put it where I saw it daily, and naturally read it over frequently. After a while I began to wonder what those DAWN books really contained. My curiosity very gradually increased until I sent to my friend for the first two volumes and began to read them.

But the "eyes and ears of my understanding" still refused to open and I was nearly through the first volume before my interest was fully aroused. As I now recall it, it seemed like awaking from a night's sleep: we begin to be conscious it is morning and soon will be time to get up; then we close our eyes for another nap, until we suddenly find it is broad daylight and we must be up and about our business. Then we get fully awake. So it was

with my reading the DAWNS. At times in reading Vol. I., my interest would be aroused, but I soon relapsed into that dreamy, half-conscious state, until toward the last of the volume I found myself fully awake and was eager to begin the next volume. Before I was half through that I sent for the other four volumes to have them at hand as soon as needed.

The little tract that awakened my interest was "Do You Know?" and I intend to scatter that seed wherever I think there is a chance of its doing good. I wish I could express in words my thankfulness for the blessing received through reading the DAWNS and the study of God's Word in connection therewith, and also the TOWER publications. Right here let me thank whoever is responsible for sending me recently a package of six of your discourses published in a Pittsburg journal. I am so grateful for them, for I need all this "meat." So far as I know there are but two other people in town who believe in MILLENNIAL DAWN, and they, unlike myself, seem not to care to run for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus, and I have no one in full heart sympathy with me to talk with, so it is a real feast to me to get the TOWERS and all such reading upon the subject now so dear to my heart.

As for me, I feel that I am indeed a "new creature." I cannot recognize myself today as being the same person who once was so ready to "curse God and die," and to think that, after all my sinful rebellion against him, he should permit me to see this wonderful revelation of his plan and receive the blessing far beyond anything I should ever have dared to hope for, teaches me a lesson in humility that I shall never forget. Now in days of trials and perplexities I can say, "Be still! It is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth to him good." I can even thank him for bringing me through these devious paths of doubt and despair, sorrow and suffering – rejoicing in tribulation, since it has brought me to his

feet, humbled and ashamed, but now ready and anxious to do his will wherever it may lead me.

Last spring I withdrew my membership from the Universalist Church, although less than a year before my only child united with the Church. Then was a trial for me. I felt if I was to belong to the one true Church of the living God I should "come out of Babylon," yet I knew not what influence my doing so would have upon my child. But since I took that step in obedience to what I believed to be the Lord's will, I felt that no harm to my child should result.

My daughter has since come to see this "Present Truth," and wishes now that she had not joined the Universalist Church, yet does not quite want to withdraw from it, and I do not urge it. The seeds of truth are sown in her heart, and she says she "can't believe anything else since she has seen this," so I am content to trust the outcome to the Lord. She is really but a child yet, and, living the pleasures of youth, does not seem to want to sacrifice much for the Truth's sake. Later on she may, for she is a good girl, very bright and intelligent, and, with all her fondness for the good times usually enjoyed by young people, she has an undercurrent of sober, serious thought and a deep reverence for those things which so greatly interest me – and herself, too, only in less degree.

Pardon this lengthy letter, which I hope has not proved uninteresting to you, and now may the Lord's blessing be upon you and all co-workers in his cause.

In deepest gratitude, I am, your sister in Christ,

_____, N.H.
