

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## The Truth Shall Make You Free

*"If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." - John 8:31, 32.*

IT WAS a maxim of the Jews, that no man was free, but he who exercised himself in the meditation of the law.' " By the simple process of inventing this maxim the bondage of the great mass of the Jews to the law was assured. There was no reason to seek freedom from the law as long as they were convinced that liberty was to be gained by mere meditation on it. It is true that "whatsoever things were written aforetime [including the law] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," but this fact does not make true their maxim, for the sacred writings bring their blessing only to those who use them as they were intended to be used. It is just as false a maxim today to say, "I have the truth, therefore I am free." Every slave knows some truth. The better translation which Rotherham gives of our text makes clear why the Jews of Jesus' day, who thought they were faithful followers of Moses, as well as the majority of those down to our present day who have thought of themselves as followers of Jesus, have never attained liberty. His version reads: "If ye abide in My Word of a truth My disciples ye are; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

### Liberty Attained by "Dwelling" in His Word

Deliverance from the slavery to which Jesus alluded was promised only to true disciples; and true discipleship, He said, could be attained only by abiding, dwelling, in His word. "Continue" is too mild a word to describe the state of a genuine disciple. He will dwell in that Word, daily, hourly, moment by moment. This means a devotion to that Word that makes it, or strives to make it, the guide of every moment-of every thought, of every act. The result is not just a knowledge of truth, but, as the Greek clearly shows, a personal, intimate, practical, living knowledge of truth. Of the four Greek words meaning "to know" that are used in the New Testament, Jesus here uses the one giving this deepest meaning. This is not something acquired the day we hear a discourse or read a book, but it is attained by the long process indicated in the Greek and shown by Rotherham's marginal reading, "Ye shall get to **know** the truth."

It is safe to assume that contact with truth always has an effect; but, the effect varies so that "to the one we are the savor of death unto death. and to the other the savor of life unto life." "The general effect . . . is to break the shackles of superstition and to make people independent, but these effects are of questionable profit to those who are not disciples in the school of Christ. To others, freedom and light of knowledge are apt to bring nearly as much bane as blessing, leading often to arrogance, self-conceit, unkindness, boastfulness, combativeness, dissatisfaction, and general unhappiness. These evil results come upon those who are made free in some respects only, and left bound in other respects; and this is the general and growing condition of the civilized world today, including the majority in the nominal church.

### **Sin's Bondage**

Our Lord's explanation that follows our text, that "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34), is used by the Apostle Paul as the basis of his discussion in the sixth to the eighth chapters of Romans, culminating in the glorious prospect of every creature in the universe having the opportunity of deliverance from, every form of bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (Rom. 8:21.) The One who has planned this transfer from the kingdom of darkness into His Kingdom of Light determined that every one in it should first have an adequate acquaintance with bondage before having freedom offered to him. The little handful comprising the Church are granted in advance of the rest what amounts to a complete liberation, but without depriving them of the advantages of contact with sin and its ravages. The fact that they are left in the midst of an evil world under the rulership of the most guilty of all sinners, the hardest of all taskmasters, does not lessen their freedom of heart; no, not even the fact that the new creature must be content to find its present expression through a body the members of which are distorted and contaminated by sin. The new creature's own sinful body has no more effect on its freedom from sin than have the other sinful bodies that surround it. The new mind is entirely devoted to righteousness, and therefore, while patiently accepting and profiting by the imperfections of its temporary body, and the imperfections of its neighbors and brethren, it holds a steady reign on every tendency of that natural body. The mind of Christ can never be a slave to the human appetites and propensities but must be the master of them. It can never hide behind the excuse, "That is just my way. For the Christian, however, to take over the responsibility of regulating the lives of others would be a sin comparable to that of neglecting to regulate his own life in conformity with the mind of Christ, thus failing to "dwell" in His Word, to "walk in the light."

The "Jerusalem which is above is free. . . We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise, . . . not children of the bondwoman but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 4:26 5:1.) Paul's reference in this passage is evidently to freedom from the law. For those Jews, as both Jesus and Paul imply, the thing greater even than being made free from the law, is the freedom offered in common to Jew and Gentile, freedom from sin and the curse which it brought death. This deliverance is not merely as regards the final stage of death, but the death that reigns in our mortal bodies, manifesting itself in depraved affections, unworthy ambitions, selfish purposes, petty aversions, prejudices, superstitions, willfulness, fault-finding, touchiness, impatience, foolish anxieties, fears, avarice, envy, strife, and a multitude of other little demon qualities that haunt the lives of all who in any degree seek their own will. What a changed universe it will be when "the creation itself [R.V.] also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. 8:21.) This "Declaration of Independence" will eventually have the signature of every creature in the universe who is willing to "dwell" in His Word. Already, by various testings, a little Gideon's band is being found of those who are devoted not only to the knowing but also to a doing of His will in such fashion that it pervades every

moment of every day. They alone can now truly say, "The law of the **spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." - Rom. 8:2.

### **Liberty in Christ**

The spirit of life in Christ Jesus must of necessity be in every respect counter to the spirit of Satan and of the world that he governs. The one ' therefore who s in Christ is a new creature in the most absolute sense, though it is the will only and not the body that is new. This new creature is liberated from all blame as to the sinful tendencies of the old body, for he not only takes no pleasure in its evil ways and desires, but vigorously opposes them by every effort and strategy he can invent. Additionally, that his liberation may be complete, he has an imputation of the merit of Christ's righteousness covering the imperfections -of his body, and balancing all that is charged to his account in God's records. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1), but instead, freedom "from the law of sin and death " The situation is paradoxical in that to gain **liberty** one must become a **bond-servant** of Jesus Christ. This he cannot be and be a man-pleaser. "The fear of man bringeth a snare," and any one who is in bondage to man or to the opinion of others cannot serve the Lord with a "single eye." If he is a slave to himself or to any other creature he must first gain his freedom to become the bond servant of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:10; 4:3, 9.) "No man can serve two masters." (Matt. 6:24.) The first step of Christian discipleship, Jesus said, is to "deny self." Thus having gotten rid of the old master, one is ready to "follow" the great Burden-bearer.

### **The Christian's Defensive Warfare**

Having attained the liberty that is the result of a personal knowledge of the truth, there is then a life-long struggle to retain it. In this also our opponents are the world, the flesh, and the Adversary. These do not represent merely individuals, but each is a supreme commander of a host more varied in its methods of attacks than any earthly army with its numerous divisions. Strangely enough it seems usually to take longer to learn to know the many devices of the flesh than those of either Satan or the world. This is largely because its warfare is in the main of the guerrilla type. Many of its tactics are, however, undoubtedly suggested by its wily ally. Who else but Satan would have thought of employing such deceitful phrases as "free-thinker," "I have a mind of my own," etc., to assure the perpetuance of our slavery to our own imperfect reasonings. Rare indeed is the Christian who has learned in the early years of his discipleship that he is not "sufficient of himself to think [reason, Greek] anything of himself; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. 3:5.) What a happy and blessed day it is when that fact is actually learned and we begin to enjoy the liberty that this truth gives. The exercising of this liberty consists in following slavishly, but joyfully, the will of God. Since all in the universe that are not devoted to the doing of God's will are in "the bondage of corruption," His truth alone can make "free indeed." All else is slavery. When finally Satan's lying labels are torn from all these bondages, which all but those who "personally know the truth" have been induced to believe are forms of liberty, the "creation itself" can "be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

The names of the shackles the world, the flesh, and the Devil have placed upon us are legion. Time therefore would not permit our even listing them all. It will, nevertheless, well reward us to briefly glance at a few of the more common ones, for among them are many that it is possible for one to wear while boasting of his liberty.

### **Yield Your Members Servants unto Holiness**

One would suppose that surely the lower appetites would be instantly brought under control of the divine will as soon as the truth is understood that "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price"-with our gracious heavenly Father's chiefest treasure. (1 Cor. 6:19, 20.) But how few can claim that "whether we eat or whether we drink, or **whatsoever** we do, we do all to the glory of God"? (1 Cor. 10:31.) Death even to these lower appetites is a long, a tedious process for most disciples, for it means that the habits of years must be broken that the dictates of the flesh may be forsaken and no, human functions be used "except so far as they operate to fulfill the original and wise intentions of the Being who implanted them.

Still more subtle are the deceptions of those appetites we speak of as the higher ones -- desire for knowledge, fellowship, the esteem of others, and the like. As eating and drinking are essential in our present existence, so also are these higher propensities. But even though they are less base than the others, their abuse is none the less to be reprehended. To acquire knowledge merely that one may argue more effectively, is to cultivate pride, an inveterate and merciless foe of the new creature. To seek fellowship merely to gratify the social instinct, is to give complacency to a starving spirit. Pride is served if the esteem of others is sought for any purpose other than the glory of God. We are "a spectacle for men and for angels" not that they might admire us, but that they might see God in us, as He was manifest in Christ because of His never varying love for the Father's will. This love for God's will can mean only that love for righteousness and hatred for evil will always be active, always in operation.

### **Bondage to Whims**

In cultivating an aversion to evil one can become so enamored with his self-righteousness as to be entirely unconscious of the fact that instead of using this aversion as God intended, he is becoming a slave to it. As for instance, one might, in his aversion to evil, be continually fretting and fuming about it; thus making himself and every one else miserable. The purpose of our experience with evil is that we may learn to set our hearts on things above. An aversion to evil is inevitable, essential, and proper, and must in some degree include all imperfections of which we are conscious. Evil will eventually be banished from the universe, but the one who endeavors the impossible task of eradicating it before the time by attempting a complete reformation of his brethren and neighbors, in accordance with his own imperfect ideals of perfection, is not only inevitably doomed to disappointment, but what is more important, he is using time and energy that could have been, **should** have been used in bringing his own body into subjection.

But while aversions to evil are essential and proper for the Christian, there are other aversions that are improper and should not be encouraged, as they may deprive one of spiritual blessings. Sometimes, perhaps because one's mind is in a degree carnal, some little personal trait of a speaker is made to be of greater importance than the beautiful truths he is declaring; or the listener, not agreeing with the speaker on every point, is so engrossed with his disagreements that he fails to discover the many sanctifying truths on which he could have agreed and received much benefit. Similarly many privileges of service are missed by those who choose to perform only those for which their flesh has no aversion, And in a multitude of other ways uncontrolled aversions rob the life of its joys; but for the one who has attained emancipation through the power of the spirit, new beauties unfold every day as he centers his heart, his affection, his vision on things above and beyond this sin-cursed earth. This is the walk of faith.

### **Manifestations of Bondage to Self**

In ways too numerous to mention, bondage to self is manifested: confirmed fault-finding -- an effort to conform every one to our imperfect judgment; easily disturbed feelings -- because things are not going our way; impatience--because our ideal of perfection is not attained by others; excitement--because others have not agreed with us, etc. He who possesses true liberty of spirit is not easily excited by opposition. By the power of grace he has inward strength, and the nature of strength is to be deliberate. When his views are opposed, therefore, he is not hasty to reply. While not indifferent, he replies calmly and thoughtfully. Confidence in God gives confidence in the truth, and we are assured that God can have no fellowship with that which is opposed to truth. If our own sentiments or beliefs are not correct, they will pass away in due time; because "everything which is false necessarily carries in itself the element of its own destruction." Therefore if the teachings of those who oppose are false, they bear no stamp of durability. They must sooner or later fall. Our strong faith in God and in His truth, of which He is the protector, should destroy all our over-eagerness of nature. We should therefore be calm amid opposition, patient under rebuke.

Again, he who enjoys this true liberty of spirit, when he has submissively and conscientiously performed a duty, following the leadings of the Lord, will not be troubled or unduly anxious with regard to the result. He who asserts that he has left all in the hands of God, and at the same time manifests a troubled and agitated spirit about the results, gives evidence that he has not made the complete surrender which he professes: Entire surrender and undue anxiety cannot exist at the same time.

As another has remarked, the true spirit of liberty is found only in those who "keep the heart totally disengaged from [free from enslavement to] every created thing, in order that they may follow the known will of God"; or only in those who, in the words of St. Paul, are "dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God." The supremacy of the divine will in our life, the reign of God in our heart, must necessarily have a direct and powerful operation in our mortal body, bringing all into subjection and subordination to that will. True liberty consists in being free from self; liberated from the dominion of the world -- a heart where the Spirit of God rules.

From all forms of bondage there may be temporary liberation by human means, and there will be moments of peace and happiness resulting; but there is only the one means by which permanent deliverance may be accomplished. This blessing is for those who "get to personally know the truth" by the process of "dwelling" in His "Word." One simple and glorious truth, if made a transforming power in the life, is sufficient to emancipate one from nearly all the enslavements of self that have been mentioned. That truth, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," reveals the "Kingdom of heaven" and its divine King. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:25.) "God be thanked, that [though] ye were the servants of sin, ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:17, 18.) "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also [who claim to have been made free by the truth] should walk in newness of life." - Rom. 6:4.

- P. E. Thomson

(Condensed from July, 1942 Herald)

## "Even at the Doors"

"What will be the sign of thy presence, and of the consummation of the age?" - Matthew 24:3  
(Diaglott).

"When ye shall see all these things, know that he is near." - Matthew 24:33 (margin).

IN the May-June issue of the *Herald* we expressed the belief that the very fact that the disciples asked the Lord what the sign of his presence would be, indicated a recognition on their part that it might be possible for them to reach the end of the Age, and be actually living in the days of his second presence, and not know it. As corroborating this view we noted that that very condition had obtained at his first advent. Signs, plain and eloquent enough to those who had eyes to see and ears to hear, failed altogether of recognition by the great majority of "his own to whom he came (John 1:11).

Again, dear brethren, we urge the utmost consideration of others who may not be able to reach our conclusions. In his own mind it is, and not in that of another, that the Apostle urges every man to be fully persuaded (Rom. 14:5). No matter how sure we may be that we have the truth on this or on any other subject, we know not anything yet as we ought to know it (1 Cor. 8:2). When we know even as we are known, we shall realize how dim even our clearest vision here has been (1 Cor. 13:12). Meantime let us think and let think. And as we test the teachings which come to us (1 John 4:1), let us observe carefully the effect which such teachings have had in the lives of those who introduce them to us (1 Pet. 1:22; Heb. 13:7).

### PAROUSIA

Since these views depend to some extent on our understanding of the word *parousia*, it will be appropriate at this juncture to consider objections which have been urged against its translation by the word presence. One brother whose Christian character and sincerity we do not for a moment question, but with whose conclusions we cannot agree, writes as follows:

"The teaching that our Lord has already come and is invisibly present is based largely upon the understanding that the Greek word *parousia* is fully and solely represented by the English word presence, whilst not a few appear to be under the impression that the Greek word connotes unseen presence. A few remarks concerning this word, therefore, may not be out of place here. This word occurs 24 times in the N. T., and is frequently used without any reference to our Lord's return. Twenty-two times it is translated coming and on two occasions presence. In relation to earthly things the usual meaning of the word is arrival which, we would suggest, is the nearest possible English equivalent to the Greek."

That the word *parousia* is frequently used without any reference to our Lord's return is undoubtedly true, as anyone may see for himself by reference to the twenty-four places in the New Testament in which it appears. Furthermore, the impression, if any hold it, that the word denotes an unseen presence is doubtless erroneous. Nothing in the word *parousia* indicates whether the presence of the person or thing under discussion is seen or unseen. *That* must be determined by the context in every case. But that the literal meaning of *parousia* is presence no scholar disputes. In the two instances in which it is thus translated in the Authorized Version it is evident that the translators realized neither coming nor arrival would do. "For his [Paul's] letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech con-

temptible" (2 Cor. 10:10). To say that his bodily coming or his bodily arrival is weak would not make sense. Yet it is the same Greek word *parousia* translated coming in the other twentytwo places. Again "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). Manifestly the Apostle is not contrasting his coming with his going or his arrival with his departure, but, as the translators themselves recognized, his presence with his absence, and the obedience of the Church not at the moment of his arrival or departure, but during the period of both his presence and his absence.

The translators of the R.S.V., while retaining the word coming in the text of many passages, disclose in the margin that the literal meaning of the Greek is presence. This is confirmed by the word-for-word translation of the Diaglott,\* although the version given in its margin frequently deviates therefrom.

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\*Except in two instances (1 Thess. 3:13 and 4:15) where, for some reason not apparent, coming is given.

### **ROTHERHAM'S EXPERIENCE WITH PAROUSIA**

Some of our readers may recall the series of articles on "Signs of the Master's Presence" which appeared in this journal thirty-four years ago. They may remember that in the issue for October 1936 we examined the word *parousia* and were not a little perplexed that so able a scholar as Rotherham did not translate it uniformly by the word presence in the twenty-four places in which it occurs. At that time we said:

"Rotherham, who does not *deny*, but affirms, the correctness of presence, uses arrival twenty times and presence only four times. When so learned a scholar as Rotherham selects arrival rather than presence for his translation, although admitting presence to be the literal meaning, we are naturally interested in learning his reasons. But when we ascertain them, they prove singularly unconvincing. In an elaborate footnote to 1 Thessalonians 2:19 he labors (unsuccessfully, we think) to vindicate his position. We quote:

'The sense of presence is so plainly shown by the contrast with absence, implied in 2 Cor. 10:10, and expressed in Phil. 2:12, that the question may be asked, Why *not always* so render it?' [Yes, Brother Rotherham, we do ask this very question.] 'The answer is,' he continues, 'because *parousia*, in some cases, plainly marks an event rather than a condition, a transitional point, rather than a continuous line. Take for example, 1 Cor. 15:23. Here the three points: first, Christ's resurrection; second, his *parousia*; third, his delivering up the Kingdom, etc. The *parousia* will not fall into series, will not file off a rank in the resurrection, except as a point. Hence, for this place, presence, a state, is not the word; coming or arrival may be.'

"But what if it should appear that in 1 Cor. 15:23 the resurrection, the *parousia*, and the delivering up of the Kingdom are not three points, three events, but are three states, three periods of time? In that case this argument of Rotherham's would fall to the ground, and he himself would then, presumably, *always* translate *parousia* by presence."

Just after *The Herald* for October, 1936 had gone to press we learned that the second edition of Rotherham's New Testament, which was the one in our library, had been followed some years later, by a third edition,\* in which *parousia* is consistently translated *presence*. Note the following, from the Appendix of his third edition, given in his own words, under the caption, "Presence."

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\* This valuable third edition was reprinted in 1959, and is supplied by our Institute at \$12.95 postpaid.

"In this edition the word *parousia* is uniformly rendered presence (coming as a representative of *this* word, being set aside). The original term occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament. The sense of presence is so plainly shown by the contrast with absence (implied in 2 Cor. 10:10, and expressed in Phil. 2:12) that the question naturally arises, Why not always so render it? The more so, inasmuch as there is in 2 Pet. 1:16 also, a peculiar fitness in our English word presence. This passage, it will be remembered, relates to our Lord's transformation upon the Mount. The wonderful manifestation there made was a display and sample of presence rather than of coming. The Lord was already there; and, being there, he was transformed and the majesty of his glorified person was then disclosed. His bodily presence was one which implied and exerted power; so that power and presence go excellently well together-the power befitting such a presence; and the three favored disciples were at one and the same moment witnesses of both. The difficulty expressed in the notes to the second edition of this New Testament in the way of so yielding to this weight of evidence as to render *parousia* always by presence, lay in the seeming incongruity of regarding presence as an event which would happen at a particular time and which would fall into rank as one of a series of events, as 1 Cor. 15:23 especially appeared to require. The translator still feels the force of this objection, but is withdrawn from taking his stand upon it any longer by the reflection that, after all, the difficulty may be imaginary. The *parousia* in any case is still in the future, and may therefore be enshrouded in a measure of obscurity which only fulfilment can clear away: it may, in fine, be both *a period* - more or less extended, during which certain things shall happen -and an *event*, coming on and passing away as one of a series of divine interpositions. Christ is raised as a first-fruit - that is one event; he returns and vouchsafes his presence, during which he raises his own -that is another event, however large and prolonged; and finally comes another cluster of events constituting the end. Hence, after all, presence may be the most widely and permanently satisfying translation of the looked-for *parousia* of the Son of Man."

### **OUR LORD'S PAROUSIA OCCUPIES A PERIOD OF TIME**

Other scholars of note have written in a similar vein. Amongst those we have consulted may be mentioned G. H. Pember, *The Great Prophecies* (1881); J. A. Beet, *The Last Things* (1898); George Milligan, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians* (1908); and J. A. Seiss, *The Last Time* (1878). From the last named we submit the following extracts:

"It is now clear to the writer, that what the Scriptures call the Coming of Christ, at the end of this Age, is not a single, but a complex event, stretching through various periods and administrations, each being sometimes referred to as the Coming, though in reality only a part, stage, or section of it. In this respect, the Second Advent is a counterpart of the First, and presents the same characteristic distributiveness. If any one will be at the pains to examine, it will be found that the prophecies which foretold Christ's first coming can, by no possibility, be all referred to one precise day, hour, year, scene, or event, but spread themselves over a period of more than thirty years. Christ *came* when he was born at Bethlehem; he *came* when called out of Egypt; he *came* when John presented him to the people as the Messiah; he *came* when he announced himself at



Nazareth; he *came* when he rode into Jerusalem on the ass; he *came* when he reappeared after his death. And yet there were not a half dozen advents, but one advent. All these separate presentations, at different dates and places, are comprehended under what the Prophets, and we still, denote, both separate and together, by the general and comprehensive expression of his *coming*, or First Advent. Thus, Micah had said that he should '*come*' out of Bethlehem - Ephrathah; and Hosea had said that he should *come* 'out of Egypt'; Malachi had said that he should 'suddenly *come* to his temple'; Zechariah had said that he should *come* to Zion 'riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass'; Isaiah had said that he would *come* 'in the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali,' as 'a great light'; while other Prophets had said that he would *come* out of Nazareth. Each of these predictions had its literal fulfillment, and each fulfillment was his *Coming*; but they were after all so many different scenes, stages, or manifestations in the one *Coming*, which is called the *first*, in contradistinction to the *second*. In other words, the Advent was complex, consisting of many diverse facts and presentations, in different localities, and successively running through the course of thirty-three years. These several prophecies could not possibly be fulfilled, except by the intervention of time to give the place for them. And, as a matter of fact, a succession of years was covered in the fulfillment.

"This, then, is the *key* by which to explain and reconcile the equally numerous and diverse predictions concerning the *Second Coming*. It is not a singular and simple thing, all accomplished in the same moment of time, or in one isolated event or scene; but it is a succession and variety of scenes, events, and manifestations, each of which is called the *Coming*, but all of which together make up the complex of the one *Second Advent*.

"If any will look up the various passages which describe the *Second Advent*, it will be seen that no man can do justice to the language of inspiration, and yet construe them all with reference to one and the same thing, occurring in one and the same point of time. In the nature of things, Christ cannot come 'as a thief in the night,' and at the same time be openly displayed in the clouds of heaven with 'every eye' gazing upon him. It is impossible that his coming *for* his saints - the gathering of them up from their graves, avocations, fields, and beds (1 Cor. 15:22, 23, 51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; Luke 17:34-37) should be identical in time and character with his coming '*with* his saints' (Jude 14, 15; Zech. 14:4, 5; Rev. 19:11-14). It is simply out of the question, that the precise coming spoken of in the Apocalyptic Epistles to the Seven Churches, or that referred to in Rev. 16:15, should be the same with that portrayed in Rev. 19:11-16. The Scriptures also distinguish between a simple parousia or presence, and the epiphaneia, or appearing. Where there is an epiphaneia, there is, of course, a presence, but a manifest, apparent, discernible presence; whilst parousia denotes simply presence, without the implication of manifestation or visibility. Epiphaneia is used six times in the New Testament, and is in five instances rendered appearing, and in the other instance brightness, in the sense of manifestation; parousia is used about fifteen times, and is uniformly translated coming, in the general sense of presence, or personal and local nearness, whether openly and visibly or not. In 2 Thess. 2:8, both words are used together in reference to the final overthrow or annihilation of the great anti-Christian confederation, which is said to be by the epiphaneia of his parousia; that is, by the appearing of his presence; which involves the implication *that the presence, 'coming,' is not manifested or discernible until then*, thus showing that the Advent involves different phases, stages and times."

For those who have not recently done so, we suggest a review of the twenty-four places in which *parousia* occurs in the New Testament. The references are given as a footnote to page 159 of Scripture Studies, Volume II, and are therefore omitted here. Such a review we have made ourselves, and find that Brother Russell's position is sustained; *parousia* never has the thought of coming, of being on the way but always, in the New Testament, has the sense of presence, and the context need never be understood as out of harmony with this sense. However, on this, as on all

matters, we exhort: "Let every man be fully persuaded *in his own mind*" (Rom. 14:5). "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1). And even if we think a brother holding a different view from ours is incompetent to teach us on this particular subject (he may not be incompetent, but even supposing he is), let us not hastily conclude that he is, therefore, incompetent to teach us anything. He may have rich stores of knowledge and wisdom on other lines of Christian doctrine and experience in which we ourselves may sadly lack, and of which it would be foolish, to say the least, for us to say we have no need (1 Cor. 12:21).

*(Continued in next issue)*

- P. L. Read

## Rest in the Lord

*"For we which have believed do enter into rest." - Hebrews 4:3.*

IN THE fourth chapter, St. Paul outlines to the Hebrews that the Jewish rest days and years pointed forward to the Christian's rest in God. Natural Israel had a seventh day of rest for man and beast; a seventh year of rest for the land; the forty-ninth year was a specially marked year of rest; and the fiftieth - the jubilee year - was also a Sabbath or rest year. The forty-ninth year was typical of the Millennium, which is the seventh onethousand-year period of the last seven thousand-year-day of the Creative week.

The Jubilee, which followed the forty-ninth year, was the time of beginning again. Each family went back to the old homestead that had been apportioned to it when Israel entered the promised land. If misfortune, improvidence, or sickness had caused the sale of the land, it was returned in fee simple to the original possessors, debts were canceled, and truly Israel began living over again. This fiftieth jubilee year typified the Grand Jubilee period following the Millennial reign of Jesus. Above, we said that the Jew *had* these rest periods, but history shows that actually very few of the Sabbaths were kept in accord with the Law's requirements.

One would think that the Jew, promised that God would look out for him and told that, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," would have been glad to let God work out his purposes in Judah.

One would think that after they had slipped away from him, only a little reminder by way of chastisement would be needed to bring them back into cooperation with God, to the restful condition of trusting in and obeying him. Each of us, no doubt, has marveled that the Jews were so stiff-necked as not to heed the Prophets; and after the repeated punishments in the form of captivities, plagues, crop failures, and troubles untold, not to heed Jesus, sent to, them by the Heavenly Father. Evidently, similar thoughts were going through Jesus' mind when he spoke the parable of the householder (Matt. 21:33-41). The immediate meaning was that Israel was the vineyard, set up with great demonstrations of divine power in Canaan. The former inhabitants were dispossessed and nothing left undone to enable Israel to keep the Law, to faithfully perform the typical sacrifices, and other features of the ceremonial law, and to bring forth the fruits of Rest in God. But those who sat in Moses' seat in charge of Israel, used their positions for their own gain and aggrandizement. It was they who persecuted Jeremiah, and it was they who killed Jesus by their conspiracies.

The Jew was not content to be a small nation ruled over by prophets, but demanded a king. The Jew could not bring himself to let the land lie idle each seventh year. Their greed would not let them pay the tithe or tenth of their increase to God. The sacrifices of the temple were considered wasteful. To have to give back the land and cancel all accounts receivable each fiftieth year was too much for the Jew's acquisitiveness; they just could not do it.

St. Paul says in the fourth chapter, "Some must enter into God's rest," and since the Jews would not, "then we which have believed do enter into rest." In Genesis 2:2, 3, it is recorded that after the creation of the earth, the animals, and finally Adam and Eve, God rested from all his work which he had created and made. *Scripture Studies*, Vol. VI, Chapter I, has shown good reason to believe that the first six days of the Creative Week were each seven thousand years long, and that the seventh is also seven thousand years in duration. This seventh day started after the creation of

Adam and Eve, and will continue until the end of the Millennial reign of Christ. God has been resting "from all his works" during the reign of sin and death. This, therefore, is the "Rest of God" to which the saints are invited.

### **THE REST OF FAITH IS BLISS**

In Romans, chapter eleven, St. Paul says that if the natural tame olive branches-the Jews-were broken off through unbelief, it would also be easy for the wild olive branches -- the Gentiles (who were grafted in to take the place of the cast-off Jew) to, be broken off. Again in Hebrews (4:11), he says: "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." God's rest has not been a rest of inactivity, and neither is our rest in God to be a lazy man's rest. It takes vigilance, careful planning and agonizing *labor* to enter into God's rest. It is not easy and effortless for the Christian to deny himself, to stop doing his own work, destroy his natural ambitions, and instead to work the works of Him that called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. And Satan is always at hand to aid and abet our flesh and the world in ensnaring us into denial of our consecration.

In all things, the Jew was an ensample-a type. In his falling away, his unbelief, his willfulness, he typed the Gospel Church. Even in the casting away of the Jewish nation they are typical of the casting off of the Nominal Church (1 Cor. 10:1-14).

Here we are in a world that is on fire; the winds of war are breaking up what remains of the Gentile beastly governments. When wars have weakened the old governments, the earthquakes finish the work, and social revolutionary governments replace the antitypical Ahab and Jezebel governments. But revolutionary governments are unstable, and already we see evidence of the swift approach of the fire of anarchy. Men's hearts are "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things ... coming on the earth," even as with those at our Lord's first advent. The still small voice of Millennial peace, happiness, and goodwill to men has not yet been heard (Luke 21:26; 1 Kings 19:11-13). And in the Church is mirrored the same hectic conditions as prevail in the world. Are the sparks of the worldly conflagration falling in our backyards? Are we being forced into quarrelsomeness toward one another by worldly-mindedness, and are these conditions causing us to lose our Rest in the Lord? If so, let us heed Psalm 116:7: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling."

Today we hear in the Church demands for more and greater works. Is this our inheritance of Jewish longings for power and bigness? Have we forgotten Jesus' words, "Fear not *little* flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give *you* the Kingdom."

We need no *feverish excitement* of work. Let us do with our might what our hands find to do, but still *rest in faith*. If all the servants are not sealed in their foreheads, the winds of trouble will be held back until this has been accomplished (Rev. 7:1-4). As New Creatures we have ceased from our works as God did from his. The Church is not *our* church or *yours*, *nor any one's* but God's. This preaching of the Gospel is God's work. So we should lay down our lives for the brethren, and leave the results with God. We should "preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season," and yet be in that peaceful, restful, and hopeful attitude of heart - *resting in faith*.

Rest implies dependence. When we rest physically, we relax all our muscles and rely upon something or someone. Standing erect illustrates self-sufficiency and the opposite of rest. Standing is accomplished by sets of muscles pulling the bony framework of the body. One set in the frontal portion pulls the body forward. Opposed to this, another set of muscles in the posterior

portion pulls the bony structure backward. By the tension of the two the body is from within balanced from front to back. Similar muscles on the right and left side keep the body from falling sidewise from the erect. A portion of the brain is devoted to keeping us in balance, and so perfect is the organism, that no thought is required. We usually lie horizontally when we rest. We depend on a bed, spring, and mattress to keep us from falling. So it is with the Christian, we must depend upon God to fight our battles: to work his great work in us: to bring order out of chaos in the world and in the Church.

### **HOLDING FAST THE CONFIDENCE AND REJOICING OF THE HOPE**

When the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mt. Seir allied themselves and invaded Judah (2 Chron. 20), Jahaziel, a Levite, received this message to Jehoshaphat from God's spirit: "Do not be afraid or dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but *God's*. Tomorrow you will find the invader by the Cliff of Ziz, at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. You shall not need to fight; set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you." Here was one case where the leaders of Israel really entered into God's rest. Jehoshaphat believed the message and organized the people into great choral groups to march before the army, singing and praising as they went.

Modern military leaders know the inspiring effect upon their men, and the terrifying effect upon the enemy of a singing army. Possibly, the Jews were above the clouds in the hills, and the invaders were coming up the side of the Cliff of Ziz through a fog. Imagine hearing a great company of men while marching sing a stirring song, such as "Mine eyes can see the glory of the Presence of the Lord; he is trampling out the winepress where his grapes of wrath are stored." And the hills take up the echoes and reverberate the thunder of the intonations. Judah's arrogance in thrusting aside all idea of concealment and surprise; their utter disregard of carefulness in not waiting behind entrenchments, walls, or rivers for the invaders to attack-this apparent lack of strategy may have been the more subtle as it probably portended to the invaders a confidence which struck terror to the hordes of Israel's enemies and disorganized them.

Regardless of what natural means may have been used, the account merely says, "And when they began to *sing* and *praise*, the Lord set ambushments against Ammon, Moab, and Mt. Seir, ... and they were smitten." Then is described how the three allied armies turned on each other and destroyed themselves. The end of the account is, "So the Kingdom of Jehoshaphat had repose and God gave him rest all round about." Jehoshaphat had to go out to meet the enemy. Judah had to exercise faith and trust in God. If they had stayed in Jerusalem, no ambushments would have smitten the invaders. If they had not sung, the enemy would not have fought one another in their confusion. So we must step out on God's promises and labor to enter into his rest, if we would have *God* fight our battles.

Friends, let us "begin to *sing* and *praise*" and let the Lord fight our battles for us, while we *Rest* in *Faith*.

-B. F. Hollister

## The Deep Things of God

*"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts." - Psa. 42:7.  
"The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." - 1 Cor. 2:10.*

IN NATURE deep is continually calling unto deep. The depths of the clouds are calling to the depths of the sea; and the sea responds and permits the sun's rays to pick up water from its surface and carry it to the clouds, and thence by the winds to the thirsty land. It is true also when the waterspout strikes the ocean. It is a case of deep calling unto deep.

Then there are deep things in the tree that call to deep things in the soil and in the air. All the cells of the tree must be nourished, and consequently they call out for sustenance.

It is true in the realm of the intellect. The deep things of science call out to him who hath the depth of intelligence to appreciate them. The orbs of space and the vast inter-stellar spaces call out to the astronomer. Various laminated and fossiliferous deposits call out to the geologist. The aligned forces of gravity, heat, and electricity call out to the physicist. Atomic energy appeals to the chemist. The diseases that are deep seated in the human body call out to the pathologist and the therapist. Deep things of the mind invite the attention of the psychologist.

But the deepest of deep things are those things that are spiritually deep, and the deepest capacities are those that enable us to respond to the things of the spirit. "The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Truth is fact. Such fact may be self-evident, truism, or it may lie deep down. When James Watt saw the steam lifting the lid of the teakettle, he beheld a simple thing, and what millions of persons had seen before him. It took much searching in the realm of thought before the steam engine was invented as a result of discovering the expansive power of steam. Then came the further idea that ships might be propelled by steam, and Robert Fulton concentrated all his energies to bringing this to pass.

### Advanced Revelations

It is easy to permit ourselves to think that we have been given the last word of truth and that there is nothing else to be found out. This of course is a colossal mistake. Yet there are those who resent all advanced revelations. If one enjoys such revelations and is living close to the Lord, he will become a target for shafts of obloquy even from some whom he deemed were his friends. This is especially true if he is thoroughly honest and outspoken. It is not always wise to tell all that one knows. Jesus said, "I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." There are occasions when it is good to be silent. Advanced truth can be received only by those whose minds have been prepared to receive it. If soil be not soft and porous, it will not absorb the rain. Truth cannot be forced on any one.

Sooner or later people will find their true level. The jackdaw in the peacock's feathers was only a jackdaw after all. Tares in the garb of wheat are still tares; and wolves in sheep's clothing are still wolves. The frog need not pretend that he can fly like the eagle; yet he is all right in the pond, which is where he belongs. That is a fact which he must see in order to be true to himself. At least, he must not desire to be elsewhere. Unless one has clear vision, he misses many things as he goes through life. 'To be able to see that what is true is true, and what is false is false, is a wonderful faculty to possess, and is one possessed by but few persons. This thought is expressed in Hebrews 5:14: "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both [the real] good and [the real] evil." As, for instance, between sectarianism, and brotherly love and tolerance. By the majority of men truth is perceived when it is superficial and obvious, not that which is deep and hidden. Such recognize it when it is a fruit that hangs conspicuously on the

bough; whereas the real truth seeker looks deeper. He knows that the most precious truth lies inside the nut, and that the nut has to be cracked before the kernel can be secured. The parables of Jesus usually have superficial meanings of moral and ethical worth, but contain hidden truths of still greater value, packed, like the kernel of a nut, inside the shell. "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable spake He not unto them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 13:34, 35.) The deep things of God called to the deeps of the mind of our Lord; and His words have been calling to the deeps of the minds of His people throughout the age.

Some day, the deeps below calling to the deeps above, the ocean of divine love will roll over the world. But during the present time, that love has touched only certain individual lives, and this because there has been a calling and a response. "No man cometh unto Me except the Father which sent Me draw him," said the Master. But He also said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (John 6:44; Matt. 11:28-30)

### **The Call of God**

How different has been the call of God from every other call. He calls upon faith in the hearer to accept the evidences of faith upon His part, to step beyond the threshold of tangible and visible things, to recognize the fact that "things that are seen are temporal, but things that are not seen are eternal." Faith, therefore, is connected with the deep things of God. Love is another of the deep things of God. Has any one ever reached down to measure the depths of divine love? The cross of Jesus came the nearest to measuring this love.

"Measure the stars in the azure sky,  
Measure the boundless sea,  
But only Christ upon the cross  
Can measure God's love for thee."

### **If Jesus of Nazareth Came Today**

Jesus in person manifested divine love in its various elements. In the exercise of love He was humble, devout, simple, strong, calm, pure, synthetic, analytic, patient, poised, denunciatory of hypocrisy and sham. Had the world received the words of love that fell from the lips of Jesus, we should have had a new world ere this. But jealousy got the upper hand of love. And if Jesus were here to day, He would be as surely rejected as He was over nineteen centuries ago.

Over and over we observe that men do not care to think deeply, but prefer to take things at their face value, particularly in religious matters. To wear the spectacles of our grandfathers, or of trusted leaders, is much easier than to fully accept the invitation, "Come, let us reason together, saith Jehovah." "The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Ah yes, it is the possession of the spirit, and unreserved yielding to its leadings, that makes all the difference. He who has the spirit is looking for treasure not to be found on the surface. With pickax, shovel, and spade, he gets off his coat and goes to work in the mines of God to find precious jewels.

### **Divine Knowledge**

God must possess that final, that absolute and ultimate knowledge that does not change. The fact is that God knows the real truth of all things, and the real truth of all things is a fixed, changeless quantity. There was a time when man did not know certain facts about electricity, but God knew all those facts. It may be that electricity will yet be used to cure certain diseases in a manner that is not now known; but if so, God knows all about it. God knows the potency of faith as we do not know it, and Jesus knew it, for He said, "If ye have faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the sea, and it shall be done." And God knows the indomitable power of love. God's love may be compared to the ocean. An earthquake may change the bed of a stream, and the wind and the sun may dry up a shallow pool, but the ocean is still there in all its profound depths. He who possesses the spirit of truth will sooner or later discover how vast is the ocean of truth. He will then probably feel like Sir Isaac Newton, who said he was as a little boy, walking along the shore, and picking up here a bright pebble and there a pretty shell, while the mighty ocean of truth lay all unexplored before him. And now one may even attempt to go into that sea, and to dive down that he may learn something of its mysteries.

### **Unrealized Depths**

Many persons who call themselves Christians are but babes in Christ. They have never penetrated into the deep things of God. With them it is simply a matter of accepting Christ and being saved, or of rejecting Him and being lost. They have never delved down and examined the philosophy of such a proposition. They have never considered the elements that enter into an understanding and an acceptance of anything. The entire matter is much deeper than they realize, for it touches the very springs of human thought and action. Therefore, the natural man says at once, "Why should I receive Christ? Who is Christ? And why should He play a part in my life's affairs? That bugbear of torment after death I do not believe. And how can Christ make my life more of a success than it is?"

The lifting up of Jesus in the Millennial Age will doubtless overcome all adverse argument of the aforesaid nature. It will present the principles that Jesus stood for as the only desirable thing, because they will appear to be the only thing that will insure success. If they could be presented that way now, people would want Christ as their life's partner. Those who have received the Lord and His precious truth realize that truth runs in deep channels. The deeply operating laws of God tell us that in the spiritual, as in the natural realm, to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The waves of love that we send out roll back upon our consciousness and make us more lovely than we were. If we send out waves of jealousy, fear, or dislike, they react to our injury. Thus we can never escape from ourselves. If we make friends of ourselves, however, by making friends of our thoughts, words, and doings, we shall not need to effect such an escape, since we already enjoy liberty in having the spirit of the Lord.

The spirit searcheth to find out how the laws of God are operating in our affairs-how God is dealing with us. That is, we seek to learn the lessons God has for us in our various experiences. That the lesson is there, there can be no doubt. It may be a lesson of faith, as it was with Peter when he got out of the boat. Or it may be a lesson of meekness, or of humility, or of love. We may have to look below the surface to see just what the lesson was intended to be.

"This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." What? Know God? Gain a knowledge of an infinite being? Yes! But how? By gaining a heart-warming and heart-filling conception of the love of God. By realizing in our experiences as well as through divine revelation that God is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind." By searching into all the depths of the various manifestations of love.



## Christ's Personal Appeal

When Jesus was on earth He called men to Himself, to know Himself, to follow Himself. He did not say to them, "Will you join My organization?" For at first He had no organization to invite men to join. He did not say to them, "Will you accept these views that I am proclaiming?" For when He first invited men to follow Him, He had as yet proclaimed no views. He asked men to join Him. He did not ask them to join an institution; He did not ask them to believe in His *opinions*; He asked men to join Him and to believe in Him. I. was on the personal relation to Himself that He laid all the emphasis; even when years had passed away and Christ's organization had begun to develop and His views had been set before men and He called them into His life, He did not say to them even then, "I wish you would accept these views of Mine; they are the only truths." He did not say to them, "I wish you would join this fellowship of Mine; it is the only fellowship." He still said to them, "Follow Me." At the close of His teaching it was still the thought of being personally united to Himself that He would have understood to be the fundamental thought of His kingdom. "I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me, and they follow Me."

It is worth noting that Jesus Christ is the only one who dares to say to men, "Follow Me." No other founder of a great religion has based his religion on a personal following of himself. Confucianism, as a religion, consists merely in the practice of maxims. Buddhism is a religion of a method. Mohammedanism is the religion of a book and of a formula. Twelve hundred years ago Mohammed wrote it all down, never to be changed while the centuries pass, as the poet has written:

"While the world rolls on from range to range,  
And realms of thought expand  
The *Letter* stands without a change,  
Stiff as a dead man's hand.

"As the life-blood fills the growing form,  
The *Spirit* Christ has shed  
Flows through the ages, quick and warm,  
More felt than heard or read."

Does the spirit search this essence of Christ, to learn exactly what it means? Surely it does. The spirit finds that Jesus embodied all the grand things of life, the things that are good and true. The follower of Christ acquires perfect confidence in Him as the Way, which He claimed to be.

Setting aside superficialities, and embracing Jesus Christ in all His beauty, we arrive at a wellspring of the deep things of God. At that crystal pure well of truth we are able to drink long and deep -- if we will. Finding this great common center, we are drawn together in common interests, in a unity of faith and love, which is a foretaste of the wonderful joys we shall share together beyond the veil.

"O Christ, He is the fountain,  
The deep, sweet well of love!  
The streams on earth I've tasted  
More deep I'll drink above.  
There to an ocean fulness  
His mercy doth expand;  
And glory, glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land."

- *Contributed by Walter Sargeant*

(Condensed from May, 1941 Herald)

## Compensation

Oh, the compensating springs! Oh, the balance-wheels of life,  
Hidden away in the workings under the seeming strife!  
Slowing the fret and the friction, weighting the whirl and the force,  
Evolving the truest power from each unconscious source.

How shall we gauge the whole, who can only guess a part?  
How can we read the life, when we cannot spell the heart?  
How shall we measure another, we who can never know  
From the juttings above the surface the depth of the vein below?

Even our present way is known to ourselves alone,  
Height and abyss and torrent, flower and thorn and stone;  
But we gaze on another's path as a far-off mountain scene,  
Scanning the outlined hills, but never the vales between.

How shall we judge their present, we who have never seen  
That which is past for ever, and that which might have been?  
Measuring by ourselves, unwise indeed are we,  
Measuring what we know by what we can hardly see.

Ah! if we knew it all, we should surely understand  
That the balance of sorrow and joy is held with an even hand;  
That the scale of success or loss shall never overflow,  
And that compensation is twined with the lot of high and low.

The easy path in the lowland hath little of grand or new,  
But a toilsome ascent leads on to a wide and glorious view;  
Peopled and warm is the valley, lonely and chill the height,  
But the peak that is nearer the storm-cloud is nearer the stars of light.

Launch on the foaming stream that bears you along like a dart, --  
There is danger of rapid and rock, there is tension of muscle and heart;  
Glide on the easy current, monotonous, calm, and slow,  
You are spared the quiver and strain in the safe and quiet flow.

Oh, the sweetness that dwells in a harp of many strings,  
While each, all vocal with love, in tuneful harmony rings!  
But oh, the wail and the discord, when one and another is rent,  
Tensionless, broken, or lost, from the cherished instrument.

For rapture of love is linked with the pain or fear of loss,  
And the hand that takes the crown must ache with many a cross;  
Yet he who hath never a conflict hath never a victor's palm,  
And only the toilers know the sweetness of rest and calm.

Only between the storms can the Alpine traveler know  
Transcendent glory of clearness, marvels of gleam and glow;  
Had he the brightness unbroken of cloudless summer days,  
This had been dimmed by the dust and the veil of a brooding haze.

Who would dare the choice, neither or both to know,  
The finest quiver of joy or the agony-thrill of woe?  
Never the exquisite pain, then never the exquisite bliss,  
For the heart that is dull to that can never be strung to this.

Great is the peril or toil if the glory or gain be great;  
Never an earthly gift without responsible weight;  
Never a treasure without-a following shade of care;  
Never a power without the lurk of a subtle snare.

For the swift is not the safe, and the sweet is not the strong;  
The smooth is not the short, and the keen is not the long;  
The much is not the most, and the wide is not the deep;  
And the flow is never a spring, when the ebb is only neap.

Then hush! oh, hush! for the Father knows what thou knowest not,  
The need and the thorn and the shadow linked with the fairest lot;  
Knows the wisest exemption from many an unseen snare,  
Knows what will keep thee nearest, knows what thou could'st not bear.

Hush! oh, hush! for the Father portioneth as he will  
To all his beloved children, and shall they not be still?  
Is not his will the wisest, is not his choice the best?  
And in perfect acquiescence is there not perfect rest?

Hush! oh, hush! for the Father, whose ways are true and just,  
Knoweth and careth and loveth, and waits for thy perfect trust;  
The cup he is slowly filling shall soon be full to the brim,  
And infinite compensations forever be found in him.

Hush, oh, hush! for the Father hath fullness of joy in store,  
Treasures of power and wisdom, and pleasures for ever more;  
Blessing and honor and glory, endless, infinite bliss; --  
Child of his love and his choice, oh, cant thou not wait for this?

*- Frances Ridley Havergal*

## The Question Box

### *Question:*

What is the lesson to be drawn from St. Paul's words in Romans 9:21, which read: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?"

### *Answer:*

Amongst the writings of St. Paul there are some things which the Apostle Peter says are "hard to understand." (2 Pet. 3:16.) This, doubtless, is one of them. Not only have scoffers failed to grasp the import of these words, but sincere Christians have been puzzled, and not only puzzled but burdened, by them. They have seemed to shut out hope. Instead of being a part of, or at least in harmony with, the glad tidings that God has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezek. 33:11), these words seem only to proclaim his absolute sovereignty. Not in these words as St. Paul meant them, but in their misunderstanding, lies the germ of all that is most repulsive in the Calvinist doctrine of election. It is in a similarly wrong conception of this and related passages that the Mohammedan finds justification for his acceptance of the will of Allah as a destiny which he cannot understand, but to which he must, perforce, submit.

To get our bearings on the question we must go back to the time of Jeremiah. It was in a dark and troublous time that Jeremiah was called upon to serve as the Lord's mouthpiece. His counsel went unheeded; his ministry seemed a failure. In fact, he was put in the stocks by the false leaders of his time. In these circumstances his spirits sank; he decided to preach the word of the Lord no more. (Jer. 20:9.) It was while he was in this mood that there came to him an inner prompting in which, either then or later, he recognized "the word of the Lord." (Jer. 18:1.) Acting on that impulse, he went "down to the potter's house," and watched him at work molding clay into form and fashioning it according to his purpose. When he began his task, the potter had a design or pattern in mind, which Jeremiah knew not. That lump which the potter had taken shapeless into his hands might be for honor or dishonor; a vessel for the king's table, a vase for fruit or flowers, a basin in which men might wash their hands or feet.

The Prophet looked and saw that here too, as well as in his own experience, was apparent failure. "The vessel that he wrought was marred in the hands of the potter." The clay did not take shape; there was some hidden defect that seemed to resist the plastic guidance of wheel and hand. The Prophet stood and gazed -- quite possibly was beginning, in his mind, to criticize the potter for his lack of skill when he looked again and saw what followed. "So he [the potter] returned, and made it another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." It was not a lack of skill which Jeremiah saw, but skill in its highest form -- a skill not baffled by seeming or even by real failure -- triumphing over difficulties. And then, by one of those flashes of insight which the world calls genius, but which we recognize as inspiration, he was taught to read the meaning of the parable. "Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." - Jer. 18:5, 6.

Did this "word of the Lord" as it came rushing in on his mind, crush him as with the sense of a destiny arbitrary, supreme, not necessarily righteous, against which men struggled in vain, and in whose hands they had no freedom and therefore no responsibility? No indeed! Quite to the contrary. To Jeremiah that which he saw was a parable of wisdom and love, working patiently

and slowly; the groundwork of a call to repentance and conversion. Hear him further: "At what instant I [the Lord] shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up,, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." (Jer. 18:7,8.) *That* "word of the Lord" we must believe, was one that brought light and hope into the thick darkness in which the Prophet's mind had before been wrapped.\*

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\* It had as its necessary complement that which, dealing with the case of apparent failure which frustrated the purpose of the Divine Craftsman, involves what seems a change of another kind in that purpose. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." (18:9, 10.) But this, no less than the other, showed that what seemed to the Prophet the one great lesson taught by the parable of the Potter and the Clay was not that the decrees of God are irreversible, but that man is free to choose, and that though God may be constrained to punish, he delights rather to forgive.

As in thought he thus passed from the potter and his wheel to the operations of the great Master Workman, as seen in the history of nations, Jeremiah saw in them the vessels that were being molded, as on the wheel of Providence. Here was clay, indeed, but with one important difference—they were not masses of dead, inert matter. Each was, as it were, instinct with a self-determining power, which, either yielded to or resisted the plastic workings of the potter's hand. The urn or vase designed for kingly use refused its high calling, and chose another and less seemly shape. The Supreme Artisan, who had determined in the history of mankind the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitations, had, for example, called Israel to be the pattern of a righteous people, the witness of Truth to the nations, a kingdom of priests, the first-fruits of humanity. That purpose had been frustrated. Israel had refused that calling, had chosen to be as the nations round it, in its worship, its sensuality, its greed of gain, the tyranny of its oppressors. It had, therefore, to be brought under another discipline, fitted for another work: "He returned, and made it another vessel." The pressure of the Potter's hand was to be harder, and the vessel was to be fashioned for less noble uses. Shame and suffering and exile -- their land left desolate, and they themselves weeping by the waters of Babylon -- this was the process to which they were now called on to submit. *But at any moment in the process, repentance, acceptance, submission might modify its character and its issues.*

True it was that a little later on in the Prophet's work the teaching of the parable was carried one step further, to a tragic conclusion. This time it was not enough to point to the potter's patient skill. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah again, "Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests, and go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom" (Jer. 19:1) and there in their sight he was to break the bottle as a witness that, in one sense, their day of grace was over, that something had been forfeited which now could never be regained. Israel and Judah had been unfaithful to the ideal of their national existence. Never again was that form of their existence to be renewed. The form and use of this vessel of the Master Potter were to be altered altogether. But did this mean that the purposes of God had been frustrated? By no means. Israel had still a calling and an election. They were still to be used by God as witnesses to the nations, stewards of the treasure of Truth. In that thought the Prophet's heart could and did find hope and comfort. He could accept the doom of exile and shame for himself and for his people, because he looked beyond it to that remolded life which might be theirs after the period of servitude and desolation had expired. Those who, instead of accepting it, were rebelling and resisting, questioning the wisdom or the righteousness of God, were as the thing formed saying to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

The age in which St. Paul lived was like that of Jeremiah, a dark and troublous time for one whose heart was with his brethren, the children of Abraham according to the flesh. Once again the potter was fashioning the clay to high and noble uses. Israel might have taken their place as the first-fruits of the Church of Christ, as the prophets and teachers of mankind. God started, one might say, speaking as men, in the hope that it would be so. "To the Jew first," was the rule invariably followed. But here, also, there was apparent failure. Blindness, hardness, unbelief, these marred the shape of the vessels made to honor. Because this was true, did St. Paul cease to believe in the righteousness and faithfulness of God? Did he see no loving purpose behind the seeming severity? No -- the vessel would be made for what men held to be dishonor -- exile lasting through the centuries, dispersion over all the world; but this would prove to be but the preparation and discipline for the far-off future, fitting them in the end for nobler uses. The gifts and calling of God were without repentance, and the wisdom of the great Master Workman would eventually be made manifest, when, "in that day" He who 'had concluded all in sin and unbelief, should have mercy on all. Did any Israelite, zealous, impatient, eager to anticipate the purpose of him who sees the end from the beginning, question yet once more the wisdom or righteousness of God in this discipline-for him the Apostle had the answer: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that re-liest against God? Hath not the potter power over the clay?"

We have spoken thus far on the bearing of the parable on God's dealings with the nations -- especially that of Israel. That, obviously, is what was prominent in the thoughts of both Prophet and Apostle in their interpretation. But we need not shrink from accepting it as it bears on the individual life of every one of *us*. *The lesson to be drawn is a lesson of the matchless skill and infinite love and patience of the Master Potter.* One less skilled and less patient, less inclined to mercy and forgiveness, would have discarded this wretched clay long ago. But not he! *This* Potter would fain return and mold and remold till the vessel is fit for some use in the great house of which he is the Supreme Head. By the discipline of life, by warnings and reproofs, by failures and disappointments, by prosperity and success, by sickness and health, by varying work and ever-fresh opportunities, he 'has been educating us in the school of Christ, leading us to know and to do his will. Who is there of us who does not realize that this is a true account of the various experiences of life through which we pass? May not the language of our hearts continue to be, as the hymn writer has so well expressed:

"Have Thine own way, Lord,  
'Have Thine own way,  
'Thou art the potter,  
I am the *clay*.  
Take me and mold me  
After Thy will,  
While I am waiting,  
Yielded and still."

- P. L. Read.

## **Entered Into Rest**

Jimi Adams, Houston, Tex.

Augusta Cheatle, Chicago, Ill.

Helen S. Johnston, New York,

Lydia Kuehn, Toledo, Ohio

Marie C. Lundquist, Jamaica, N.Y.

Gustav Nybeck, Minneapolis, Minn.

Emily E. Pickering, Southington, Conn.

Ralph Scheel, Loyal, Wis.

Martha Siglin, Phoenix, Ariz.

Lena Welsh, Ft. Worth, Tex.