

“THE SOLDIERS OF CHRIST” — RE THE HELMET

(Br. M. L. Herr, 1916 Convention Report, Norfolk, Virginia, July 20-30, 1916, page 136.)

The helmet of salvation represents the intellectual or philosophical appreciation or understanding of the divine plan. Apparently it was less necessary in the past than now: but now, in the “harvest” when the adversary is furiously attacking the truth and turning everything scientific and educational into a weapon of destruction,—now the helmet is indispensable. And now and only is it provided, in such size and such shape that the humblest soldier of the cross can put it on. The Lord has held back the attacker within the bounds where the shield of faith would serve as protection; but now the whole armor is supplied; and not too soon for the need of the faithful. The Watch Tower publications are, we believe, being used of the Lord to the thorough equipment of the faithful—intellectually, as well as otherwise. (Note page 658, Studies 6.)

In the military equipment of the past the helmet was an important part of the armor. It was the protection for the head, both from sword-thrusts, from darts and from any missile. The head represents not merely the understanding, but the *will*. In the head resides the executive power, the government or control of the entire being. If one is wounded in the head he is weakened in will-power and is unable to control his body properly. As we are considering the spiritual interests of the new creature it must be evident that the protection of the head is a most important matter to the new creature in Christ Jesus. It was the plan of God that appealed to our intellect and led us to will and to do the Father’s will. As the conflict with our foes increase the danger of yielding increases. Should our will swerve from the divine will we would seek a way to reason upon the matter in harmony with our will and divergent from the Father’s will. It is for this reason that we need above all things to have our will protected by a clear positive understanding of the divine plan with our reasoning unbiased by the deceptive sophistry of self, just as the Roman soldier was protected by his helmet.

The first essential is a clear comprehensive grasp of the ransom, that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. A clear comprehensive, intelligent grasp of this truth makes absolutely impossible the adversary’s errors concerning the immortality of the soul, the state of the dead and the blending of natures, human and spiritual. It protects against the assumptions of spirits who disguise themselves as men who have died and who claim to live after death. If Father Adam lost human life then he no longer lives anywhere. “The earth hath He given to the children of men.” If by man came sin, then by sin came death. “The wages of sin is death.” “In that He [Christ] died for all, then were all dead.” (2 Cor. 5:14.) The completeness of the resurrection can be comprehended only as we have an intellectual grasp of the loss sustained by Father Adam. All who have a clear knowledge of these essentials of the doctrine of the ransom must realize what a protection it has been to us to have a clear intellectual appreciation of

these essential and fundamental truths. The more we study the plan of God, the more wonderful things we come to know.

“And still new beauties shall we see,
And still increasing light.”

The Lord has still been pleased to furnish through the Watch Tower Publications a complete furnishment. Those who have been faithful in making themselves familiar with the grand truths presented in the order that the Lord has been pleased to reveal them, have found themselves thoroughly furnished unto every good work. More than furnished, they are protected from error. Once the arrow of doubt, or the venomous poison darts, designed to spread spiritual contagion, were not so frequent. The shield was then ample protection for the head, the heart or for any part endangered. Now the poison-arrows are very abundant. They seem specially aimed at the head, the will. Could only Satan succeed in wounding the will he would have succeeded in overthrowing the control and of substituting his control. Think of it! One who has once known the liberty of Christ coming under the control of Satan. Surely it would not then be the general control that Satan exercises more or less over the whole world through ignorance and blindness, it would be a designed or willful acquiescence with the evil, depraved will.

Let us not overlook what the will of an enlightened, spirit-begotten one is. It is not an infant moved by various changing impulses merely.

The will of the new creature is intelligent intention. It springs spontaneously from a heart in absolute alignment with the will of God. It delights to conform to the Father's will. It has no divergent desires. In this condition of heart the presentation of these truths in their symmetry, completeness, beauty, orderliness and amazing nicety and exactness finds welcome and it merely needs the statement to appeal to him. He has moreover an eagerness, an intellectual hunger to apprehend it and make it his own. And why this eagerness? Why the eagerness of the Roman soldier to provide himself with a strong helmet? He wishes it to be so enduring that the most powerful sword thrust will be unable to cleave and no arrow or dart be able to pierce. And does not a clear comprehension of the truths represented in the Questions and Answers presented in the Watch Tower for April 1, 1916, on “The Ransom-Price and Its Application,” give us this protection? [See Reprint page 5879] I would not be so uncharitable as to state that inability to fully comprehend the nice distinctions here presented would be evidence of a heart-harmony with the will of God. I am aware, from frequent lessons before a number of the classes, that many of the dear devout friends have not as yet mastered these questions and answers. I would not take this as evidence that their wills prefer some differing thought for I know some who are very anxious for help to grasp each distinction with exactness. But I should very much fear for any brother or sister who would urge that the clearer statement of this matter in recent Watch Towers differs from our pastor's

clear presentation of the divine plan in Studies 5. Do not misunderstand me to announce that I conclude that such brethren or sisters have evil intention in so doing. I assume that they might do this with a certain kind of honesty of intention, but to my mind it is an exceedingly dangerous procedure. It seems safest to hunger and thirst for the help that the Lord provides. The Lord's arrangement is a protection for the holy will of the new creature in Christ Jesus just as the helmet of the Roman soldier was a protection to his head. But it is the only kind of a will it will protect. When the child of God ceases to be in complete harmony with the will of the Lord he will need a different kind of reasoning to suit his change of will. If the soldier should find his head enlarged, he would need to discard his old helmet and get a new one. If we should overestimate our own reasoning ability we would be quite sure to discard the provision made by the Lord through the Watch Tower channels, and have a reasoning all our own. If we discover in ourselves any disposition to do this let us be warned of the danger. We may not realize that our head has enlarged. Medical science recognizes at once that such enlargement is a disease and never once welcomes it as a sign of special advantage. It is a sure indication of trouble and should be dealt with as such. Take for instance the claim that the price of man's redemption was when our Lord ascended on high to make the presentation of the merit in the presence of the Father. Were this accomplished then the possibility of a deposit that would stand as a credit of merit securing the church during her trial-period would be nullified. There would be no protection for the Church and we would be obliged to stand in our own righteousness. Since we are unable to do perfectly the very best we could do, would cover our flesh as well as tattered rags would cover our bodies. To those of self-sufficient heart this would not disturb him. The proud heart seems pleased to boast that he has attained great liberty when he thus crucifies his own sins, misquoting and misapplying many precious scriptures.

But how precious to us is this truth that the Lord placed to our credit in Christ a sufficiency of merit to cover (provide judicially) for our unintentional flesh-weaknesses. Because of this, "If any man [in Christ Jesus] sin [unintentionally through Adamic weakness] he has an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1) What a strong enduring helmet of will-protection is this truth? The adversary's darts intending to wound our will-energy and thereby break down the government of our lives by divine truth, comes with a shaft of scorn. "See how you have failed," says the accuser. The failure was not because of disloyalty to righteousness, but plainly, clearly through inherited flesh-weakness. Even this we seek to fortify by the grace sufficient supplied by the divine promises. What a protection against the complete disheartenment that the adversary seeks to accomplish. "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. 8:33, 34)

But what calamity to our spiritual interests should the poison dart of self find entrances. Immediately our head would swell and we would need another helmet. "O yes, we get good things from the Watch Tower, BUT"—and we have grown by the appreciation of

the helps divinely provided.

One trick that the adversary employs is to have us feel a greater condemnation over failure to obey man's will than deflections from the will of God. It is right and proper that we "Render unto all their due." (Rom. 13:7) Render therefore unto Caesar the things that be Caesar's, and unto God the things that be God's (Matt. 22:21.) Nominal Christians suffer more remorse over divergence from men's laws than from disobedience to the laws of God. Satan seeks to have the new creation come under such a censure. In the countries at war, conscientious persons are persecuted because they will not follow the popular sentiment: "Kill your enemies" and are obedient to the divine law: "Thou shalt not kill." Few consider the violations of divine law who are exceedingly careful to conform with great exactness to every human requirement, not discerning the difference. Those who have the divinely provided helmet are able to discern the differences of things. While never overlooking the duty we bear toward the will and wishes of our fellow-man yet we ever place a higher estimate upon the will of God. Like Peter and John we say, "Whether it be right of God to hearken unto you *more than unto God*, judge ye." (Acts 4:19.)

How our helmet of clear knowledge of the ransom protects our head, our will. Many are disheartened, discouraged when in endeavoring to do the Lord's will they find themselves counter to the will of man. If not properly informed they are in danger of conscientiously deeming themselves worthy of all the condemnation and dishonor that willful men may see fit to hurl against them. How many today have lost all will-power by a mountain of shame that hopelessly burdens them. Not because they have violated the will of God, but because they have come under the disapproval of assumptive, self-willed men, whose will is law and who desire that their will shall be done on earth as it is not done in heaven. The divine law clearly shows that only Jehovah's will is to be recognized as law. That man is out of harmony with that law and needs to be brought into harmony with the divine will. Fallen sin-inclined, self-centered, assumptive man is not worthy of an advocate. His cause deserves no advocacy. Only those in harmony with God's will and whose imperfections are provided for by the recognition of *righteousness* in the imputed merit of a perfect Redeemer's can claim, "We have an advocate with the Father." Sinful, self-willed man will need at-one-ment through a Mediator provided in Christ Head and Body soon to be perfected. It is said that the serpent always seeks to protect its head. Is not this one way in which we may be wise as a serpent? Shall we not see that our head, our WILL is ever protected by the helmet that the Armory of Jehovah provides?