

## **SOME NOTES ON BRO. RUSSELL'S USAGE OF THE TERM "REIGN" IN HIS VARIOUS WRITINGS**

(From the pen of Arthur Newell, by his kind permission.)

Bro. Russell's writings and comments on the "Reign of Christ," like those from his pen on such subjects as Restitution, the Gospel Age, the Millennial Age, etc., cannot be properly understood if isolated from the context and from his other writings on the same subject. Rather they must be considered in the light of their context and of the following background information:

In many Tower articles he was giving direct answers to one or more questions from brethren in which a specific usage of the term being discussed was made. Naturally he used the term in the same sense or else indicated the sense he felt to be proper.

In other articles he was sometimes indirectly answering one or more questions not always spelled out in that article. These indirect answers did not always show the background of the questions being answered. In these cases it is more difficult to establish the exact sense in which the term was being used.

In most issues of the Tower the first article was for the public and newly interested without spiritual discernment and the remaining articles were more for the spirit begotten readers. In each the standpoint, scope and usage of terms were suited more for what the intended readers should be able to grasp.

If the above points are overlooked then two different articles may often seem to be contradictory, because the breadth or scope of usage may be different.

His writings in the Scripture Studies, including the 1916 forewords, were usually broader in the usage of terms and language, more general in scope, rather than concentrating upon a specific phase or aspect of the topic being discussed.

Today Bro. Russell is not here to spell out some of these points and correct misimpressions in a later issue of the Tower. We are "on our own" as it were. However, even when he was here he had problems of the same nature. Some brethren did not seem to understand that he used various approaches and discussed different specific aspects of the same general topic from time to time. Reprint page 2676, par. 1 reads in part: "On questions of so much intricacy it is sometimes difficult to use language sufficiently exact; especially if at the time of writing objections or criticisms are not fully anticipated. Were we to express the above points again we would try harder, as in Vol. V, to guard our statements, and thus to prevent any misunderstanding." Other references showed that this was a recurring problem.

In Reprint 2739 (1900) and Reprint 5023 (1912)—both questions and answers—he was obviously referring to the Mediatorial phase of the Reign. In Reprint 5916 (1916) under the subheading “Significance of the Presence of the King” and in foreword Vol. 2, page viii, par. 2; foreword Vol. 3, Page iv, par. 2 ... (all updated to 1916) he was using “Reign” in the broader sense, namely including other aspects as well as considering the Mediatorial phase of the Reign.

We may be sure that none of the brethren feel that the Mediatorial phase of the Reign has begun or can begin until the entire number of the spirit begotten (the little flock and the great company) is completed and their fleshy bodies dead. Then the merit of Jesus’ sacrifice will be applied for the world, etc. However, some well intentioned brethren seem to have lost sight of other aspects than the Mediatorial phase of the Kingdom. Nevertheless Luke 19:12 indicates that, in some senses, our Lord began His Kingdom Reign upon His return in 1874, then in other senses in 1878 and 1914, and in still other senses in the future as of now. Dan. 2:44.

One of the best pieces of good advice left with us by our Pastor was “always examine the context!” That is always very valuable, whether studying the Scriptures or the helps which our Present Lord gave us through the ministry of that faithful and wise servant. Unless followed, both the Scriptures and those helps do seem to contradict themselves in places. However, with that principle rightly applied our problems solve themselves as we seek to know and to do our Father’s will in accordance with the last verse of hymn number 224:

Higher than the highest heaven,  
Deeper than the deepest sea,  
Lord, thy love at last has conquered  
“None of self, and all of thee.”  
None of self, and all of thee,  
None of self, and all of thee,  
Lord, thy love at last has conquered  
“None of self, and all of thee.”