

MSB 206

MORE SEED AND BREAD

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q, Sellers, Founder - David R. Hettema, Director

OUR WARFARE

By Michael A. Steele

Union with God presupposes conflict, a variance as predictable as the law of gravity, pulling the one who believes the record God has given of His Son into a realm far superior to anything seen or imagined in the natural world.

Amid the worldly turbulent vortex of this present evil eon (this present outflow of wickedness), God has placed the believer in Jesus Christ as a soldier, and has provided, by way of faith, every armament necessary to defeat the enemy. When the believer uses these, God assures and guarantees victory before, during, and after any waged conflict with the adversary. Under God's designed implements and strategies of battle, defeat for the believer is an intrinsic impossibility; and though the war may seem long protracted, vexing and even injurious, victory is as certain as the diurnal setting of the sun. God has placed in the hands of His saints-- through Jesus Christ and by His grace-- a portion of the destiny of the universe, and has given the believer the opportunity and capacity to fight and war for THE TRUTH, the Face and Glory of God, an honor which has no equal.

Divine-transforming power creates a new identity which cannot be altered by time or circumstance. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say unto you, he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent me has everlasting life,*

and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24). Coexisting with this wonderful truth are innumerable problems and perplexities, for permeating all life on earth pervades the absolute quietude of God. The written Word rests as God's only communication to mankind. In his book *The Silence of God*, Sir Robert Anderson says, *"No one may limit what God will do in response to faith. But we may dogmatically assert that, in view of the revelation that He has given of Himself in Jesus Christ, He will yield nothing to the petulant demands of unbelief. And that revelation supplies the key to the double mystery of the silence of Heaven and the life of faith on the earth"[pg.x]. "A silent Heaven is the greatest mystery of our existence" [pg. 1].*

It is in this silence, the Dispensation of the Grace of God which began at Acts 28 :28, that the child of God finds himself inextricably bound. (See **Seed & Bread** issue no. **57, The Dispensation of Grace**, by Otis Q. Sellers.) The believer in Jesus Christ must fully accept, by faith, the present outflow of the grace inherent in the invisible creator as his sole source of power and strength, and should readily expect bitter, scathing opposition from the enemy. *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).* The word "wrestle" describes a personal, hand-to-hand conflict between individuals. (Only divine power is capable of handling such opposition from these elevated forces.) *"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" [vs. 16].*

The concerns of this life are many--commitments, duties, demands, constraints, and a thousand and one expectations and dreams. Yet God holds out but one hope, one expectation for the living and the dead, eonian (outflowing) life in His glorious government upon this earth. The gospel of John was *"written so that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing have life through His name" (John 20:31).* Now, this world (civilization) with its ceaseless advertisements of promise holds out, at best, temporal pleasures and shifting pledges. Today's global broadcasts of fulfillment and satisfaction simply proffer nothing to the faith-discerning eye. In these last days, wickedness is practiced for evil's sake, and the present condition of things can only be described as *darkness covering the earth and gross darkness the people (Isa. 60:2).* *"Justice has to turn away defeated, right is forced to hold aloof, for truth in our assemblies has no footing, honesty cannot enter there; truth is never to be*

seen, and moral sense has left the town." (Isa. 59: 14-15, James Moffet Translation).

There are three Greek words in the New Testament which express vast truth regarding the believer's warfare, words whose meanings on the surface, appear powerless to move or act: 1. **phroneo** 2. **politeuma** and 3. **apekdechomai**. No military strategist would even imagine applying the ideas which they convey; they simply bear no relationship to "flesh and blood." The late Otis Q. Sellers, a Bible expositor of no small reputation among those who knew him, gives a marvelous exposition of these Greek words in his tape recorded messages on Philippians (TL- 77 thru TL-80) and his pamphlet entitled **The Interpretation of Philippians 3:20**. When referring to these sources, selected quotations will be followed by the initials O.Q.S.

1. **Phroneo**: mind, disposition, temperament, inclination, predominating bent or spirit- O.Q.S. (TL - 77)

The book of Philippians is characterized by this verb; it occurs eleven times in this epistle. The Apostle Paul calls upon the Philippian believers to accept their new position in Christ, a position which formerly had been one of possessing the gifts of the Holy Spirit which were uniquely inherent in the Acts period; the ability to speak various languages, the gift of healing, the power to raise the dead. The Philippians must now live under a new administration which heretofore had not been made known-- the dispensation of the grace of God. They no longer possessed the manifest of divine presence. Some became disheartened and discouraged, desiring to hold to those things which no longer carried through, things which pure grace would not allow or permit. The dispensational change would alter their lives indefinitely. God would now deal with these saints in a dissimilar fashion. Paul exhorts, *Let this mind (phroneo- disposition) be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8).*

In this passage **phroneo** is defined by the context. Jesus emptied himself through humbleness of heart and mind by acting from a temperament which came from the Father. The Scriptures reveal beyond all doubt that Jesus is Jehovah. This fact alone establishes the origin of Jesus' disposition, that his

phroneo was directly out of God, that all the inclinations He possessed were wholly apart from the world. Similarly, the believer who actively positions a mind toward God by an honest study of the Word of God (the sword of the Spirit) becomes joint-minded with the Savior, an exercise which, over time, produces an ever greater and deeper inclination concerning the things of God. Paul plainly states, *For it is God who energiseth within you both the desiring and the energising, in behalf of his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13, Rotherham). And if in anything ye have been otherwise minded (phroneo), God will reveal even this to you (Phil. 3:15).* God takes full responsibility in showing us the way of Truth.

2. **Politeuma** - an acquired, developed, or derived character, disposition, or temperament, (The Interpretation of Philippians 3:20), O.Q.S.

"There is no doubt that the meaning of Politeuma had undergone some changes in its history. It originally meant the acquired and developed character and manner of life that resulted from living and practicing the life and customs of one of the ancient city-states. A man spoke, thought, and worshipped according to the established customs of his city. This became his politeuma or his city character. From this it came to mean simply derived, developed, or acquired character, disposition and temperament, without any thought of a city-state entering into it." (O.Q.S., pg. 8).

"When Paul said: *For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content*, he was speaking of his theogenic (God produced) polituema, that is, one facet of the character or disposition that was his from God. His contentment was something that Paul had come to learn, thus it was acquired and developed. He had not always known this, having been reared in the lap of luxury, never knowing want Yet he had acquired from God and had developed by practice, experience, and discipline a contented disposition. Every act of contentment was the outflow of a contented character." (O.Q.S., pg. 12).

3. **Apekdechomai** - assiduously and patiently wait for, New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon

"In the Grimm-Thayer Lexicon this word is said to mean "assiduously and patiently to wait for," and the suggestion is made that it compares with the English phrase 'wait it out' This is excellent-especially so in view of the fact that assiduous means "constant in application or attention, devoted, attentive, unremitting." (O.Q.S., pg. 12)

In Galatians 5:5, Paul treats this act of patiently waiting it out as something that comes from within the believer through an act of God: *For we through the Spirit eagerly wait (apekdechomai) for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

To summarize, we have seen three Greek words which, when taken together, both define the believer's mission while living on this earth and the manner in which that life is to be expressed. We are to allow that mind or temperament (**phroneo**) which was in Christ Jesus to be in us, that is, to express itself. This is something to be practiced in order that an acquired, developed character (**polituema**) be produced. Out of our **polituema** flows the act of patiently waiting things out (**apekdechomai**). This whole process is a divine arrangement, a direct act of God which flows from the One *Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man hath seen nor can see (1 Tim. 6:16)*. Every weight, every barrier, every obstacle that would hinder the Word of God and its right division must be put away with swift and decisive action, for apart from Biblical revelation God's purposes cannot be known.

The fight is one of faith--a mind that is prepared to believe all that God has spoken regardless of the pathway Truth may take. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).*

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