

EXTRACTS FROM INTERESTING LETTERS

Iowa.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – There are many things about which I should be glad to confer with you face to face, but as that seems impossible, I resort to the pen. I know that the work which our Lord has given to your hands is sufficient to take up all your time, or rather the Lord's time which he has allotted to you, and so I have hesitated to write. But again, I have thought *perhaps* he has reckoned in the time necessary to devote to the thoughts I wish to suggest; therefore I write.

As you are not yet acquainted with me, I wish to say that I verily believe that I have *no* opinion of my own that I wish to peddle, but desire that I may know and understand the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. First of all I wish to tell you that the brief history of your doctrinal development, which was published in the last TOWER, was just what I wanted to know; and on account of some resemblances to my own experience, it was a comfort to me, for it seemed as if it brought you closer to me, and I did not feel so lonesome. For lonesomeness has come over me sometimes, most crushingly, until in mercy the Lord lifted me up, and I could say with him: "Yet I am not alone, the Father is with me." Following out what then seemed the line of duty for me, I entered the ministry of the M.E. Church immediately on completing my college course. I wanted to preach the whole gospel, but I was bothered and hampered from the beginning with things I could not understand, the chief of which was, *How Christ was God*. The brethren told me it was a mystery – that I had better let that question alone, it was "deep water." My father, also an M.E. preacher, had for years been a close Bible student; he conceived a plan of collecting together all that the Scriptures said on the various topics of faith and practice, so that believers might more easily see what they should believe, and what they should do.

He was not able to carry out his plan, but dying, he fully set his thoughts before me and requested that I would work it out and publish a book the title of which should be "God's Guide For Man's Faith and Practice." I promised to do the work as he requested. He then said to me – "James, if you do *truly* study the Bible according to the plan I have indicated to you, it will take Methodism out of you." I answered – "I don't know about that, Father;" to which he rejoined – "It WILL do it, boy." I replied – "Very well, Father, if studying God's Word, and understanding it, takes Methodism out of me, all the worse for Methodism."

As soon after his decease as possible I began the work. With the Bible and the Concordance I plodded along. I indeed found some, to me, strange things; but nothing very startling occurred until I was studying the *person* of Christ. I was considering 1 Cor. 15:24-28. I had read that scripture perhaps a hundred times before, but now it seemed to say something never before seen by me. "He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power,...then shall the Son also himself *be subject* unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." Could that Scripture be true and the doctrine of the trinity be true? I could not reconcile the two. Which was right? Did the Bible *mean* what it said? or how was it to be "interpreted"? It was as if a mallet had struck between my eyes. For *three days* I was in pain – actual distress. Was the Bible right, or was theology right? I prayed without ceasing, that God *would not let* me break loose from the truth; for I dreaded falling into heresy. I realized that a conviction of the correctness of the Bible statement, as it read, and of the error of the trinity doctrine, was gradually taking possession of me, until at the end of three days, like an ice gorge in the Mississippi river, my theology broke up and went out of my heart and out of my head under the bright shining of the divine Word. Every doctrine of Theology, so-called, became to my mind an object of suspicion, but the Bible, in the same ratio, became unutterably precious. Even the doctrine of

the atonement *by the blood* came to be a matter of doubt, and I resolved that it would have to stand the severest scrutiny, or I would not believe it. For more than two years I floundered in the slough of doubts, and I had to stop preaching, for I doubted every thing excepting God, and that he was the rewarder of them that seek him, and that the Bible was the revelation of his will and purpose. I tried to understand the Bible, but could make little headway. I studied the atonement, and came to the conclusion that the Unitarians were right on that subject – that no atonement was made for our sins, that Christ is merely our Example.

I now realize what I did not then, namely, that my utter dislike or abhorrence of theology *prejudiced* me against even the truths it contained. I was in this condition when I happened on the little book – "Food for Thinking Christians." Now understand me, that all these weary months of doubt I never ceased to pray, "O! send out thy light and thy truth and let them lead me, let them bring me to thy holy hill." It seems to me today that it was in answer to that constant petition that "Food" was dropped in my path. I was prepared to receive much of it, but the atonement as there taught I resisted, as also the destruction of the wicked. But I sent to you and obtained "The Tabernacle and Its Teachings." That opened all things clearly. I there saw what the atonement really was, believed it, *loved* it, and from that day was a free man IN Christ Jesus.

O Brother, how that precious truth rejoices my heart and gives peace to my mind to-day! I have had enough experience in opposition to that doctrine. I want no more. I am glad that you will republish The Tabernacle, etc., this summer. May I make a suggestion to you? On page 9 of the little book you say that you think the wood was used in the construction of the Tabernacle, altar, etc., only to make them as light as possible and portable, and then call attention to the Temple of Solomon, that all its furniture was of solid metal. I suggest that there was doubtless *unused* strength enough in Israel to carry the whole thing in sections even if solid; but is there not evidence enough that the

wood was as necessary as the metals for typical use? You elsewhere very correctly, as I think, claim the wood to represent the justified man – justified and reckoned perfect because of his faith. Now if the Tabernacle and its appurtenances represent, in object lesson, the *whole* plan of salvation, what is there in it to represent that "this corruptible shall PUT ON incorruption, and this mortal shall *put on* immortality," unless it be that corruptible and perishable wood when it is covered – has "put on" the brass (incorruption), or as the little flock in the tabernacle, has "put on" the gold (immortality)? If this suggestion is valid, would it not be well to change the remark referred to?

[The fact that the Incense Altar and Mercy Seat were made of wood overlaid with gold, while they represent that which is perfect and divine, seems to me to prove that the wood was used for lightness. – EDITOR.]

In respect to the temple built by Solomon, I have serious doubts as to its being in any true sense a typical substitute for the tabernacle built by Moses. In other words it seems doubtful that it at all typifies the plan of redemption as it exists in God's mind. I could, at this time, more easily believe that it typifies the confused and self-praising ideas of men concerning that plan.

I make the following suggestions. If they are good, let them abide, if not good, let the light of God dispel them into mists and let them be blown away.

1st. The conception was of David's own mind. God never told him to do it. On the contrary, he objected, saying – "Spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me a house of cedars?" (1 Chron. 17:6.) It is manifest that the work was *permitted*, not commanded. True, David claimed (1 Chron. 28:19) that the pattern was given to him of God (if, indeed, that is not an interpolation,

like Rev. 20:5); but if that be true, would it not as probably [R1237 : page 8] be a type, as I before suggested?

2nd. The furniture was greatly multiplied – 10 tables for the shew-bread, 10 lamp stands, 10 lavers, and "a sea" on the back of oxen, etc., etc.

3d. It was built by the labor of foreigners (the Tyrians) and the enslaved Canaanites. The men of Israel were not engaged in it. (2 Chron. 2:17,18; 8:7,8,9.) The architect, also, who had charge of all the work, was a man of Tyre, though a half-breed Israelite. And THE KING of Tyre helped on the work with all his might. How different were the builders and the building of the Tabernacle. The hands that wrought it were *free*. It was the glad work of the children themselves. Why did the holy spirit cause the record to be made, as to who were the actual workmen engaged on the Temple? I suggest that the nations immediately connected with Israel were each, in some character, typical; and this is no new idea; if I mistake not, it is your view also. Israel represents the people of God. Egypt represents "the world that now is," which "lieth in darkness." Babylon – human organization – human wisdom trying to make the world better. Tyre represents the kingdom of Satan. See Ezek. 28:1-10 – an exact description of the Pope of Rome, who is Satan's vicegerent on the earth; and verses 11-19 a description of Satan himself. If it be objected that the manifestation of divine glory which filled the temple on the day of its dedication would certainly prove that Jehovah was the author of the building and that it therefore represented the divine will, I should think not. During the 40 years in the desert, the manifestation of the divine glory was evidence that *in great* MERCY God was with the people; but, I believe, never in evidence that he was well pleased with their works and ways. And there are many instances given in which favor was manifested to the people, while at the same time he was displeased with their works. And in this Gospel age, do we not know that great favor has been shown in years past to the believers

composing the sects, while at the same time we know by his Word that sectarian divisions are hateful to him.

I think, also, that David expresses the central thought and motive of his mind when he said – "The house that is to be built must be exceedingly magnificent *for fame and glory throughout all countries.*" (1 Chron. 22:5.) The Tabernacle, like the body of Christ, is contemptible in the eyes of the world. The temple, like all of men's ideas, must be exceedingly magnificent to the world.

Your brother in the faith of the redemption,

J. H. GILRUTH.

[We are glad to see so much evidence of study on the part of Brother G., even though we must dissent from his conclusions. We suggest that while the divine glory upon the Mercy Seat of the Tabernacle and also of the Temple did not prove Israelites to be in favor with God, it did show God's approval of the Tabernacle and of the Temple. Furthermore, let us remember that God permitted David to prepare materials for the Temple, but not to build it because he was a man of blood, a man of war; and because he had specially promised of Solomon: He shall build Me a house. (See 1 Chron. 17:11-15; 22:5-9-19.) The humble Tabernacle, whose glories were all hidden, typified the presence of God with his people in the present time, while the glorious Temple typified the Church in glory during Christ's Millennial reign.

The building of the temple, too – the fact that all the materials were prepared and fitted for their respective places, beforehand, represents how God prepares and fits, beforehand, every member of the Church. And when all are selected, fitted and ready, the glorified Church will be brought together without commotion or friction, even as the parts of the Temple were put together "without the sound of a hammer." (1 Kings 6:7.) On the contrary, the false

temple, Babylon, fits and builds and tears down and puts up continually and with great noise – Babylon – confusion.

The workers and materials coming largely from outside of Israel is also true to the facts; for God has selected most of the Church from among those not Israelites according to the flesh, out of every country and nation. These are co-working under him whom the Jewish King, Solomon, typified – our Lord, who sprang from Judah. – EDITOR.] **page 8**

Pennsylvania.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – I have just finished the TOWER. Oh! how grand. I would that I could, with pen, express my feelings, but my dear Brother, I cannot. Your earnest prayer to the Master made me feel that we all ought to go to him in such true, earnest, and with such faith. Oh, how I long to be closer to him. I wish I could be nearer you so I could attend the meetings and learn more of the Master. I hope the new book (Poems, etc.) will be what is needed, and I think it is just what we all want. Dear Brother, I feel more and more that you are right in regard to the Ransom, and I can see as the time draws nearer that all are being tried and many of the stars (ministers) are falling. May the dear Lord continue to bless you and Sister Russell in the good work, is the prayer of yours in Christian love,

S. M. BOND.

Ohio.

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – Allow me to address this letter to you. I inclose P.O. order of \$20 for my Dawn account.

Brother and Sister Adamsom are now with me and we are settled in our little "home." We have a good supply of ammunition and are ready and beginning the battle. The dear Lord is before us with encouragements and hope. We are finding a good many hungry and thirsty souls and are feeding them with the precious

things of the Word, so beautifully brought together in MILLENNIAL DAWN.

To-day is holiday here and all the city excepting three are celebrating. We are resting, praising and feasting in heavenly places. The TOWER came this morning and is commanding special attention to-day. We are all much interested in the long article, "Perils Among False Brethren." We see the truth and fact of the wonderful sifting that is now going on, and feel that it must continue until all the sons of Levi are purified and released. So we think it not a strange thing.

With much love from us all here,
I remain as ever, yours in the blessed hope set before us,

S. D. ROGERS.

P.S. – As soon as the next lot of Vol. II. of *Dawn* in paper is ready please send me about 300 and 1000 of Vol. I. by freight. Hope they will be ready soon.

Please send me a copy of the new book, Poems and Hymns, as soon as ready.

West Virginia.

DEAR BROTHER: – The "Gathering and Siftings" in May TOWER surely endears you more and more to us all.

How wonderful and love-constraining the measures whereby the Father's plans are accomplished, and so effectual while seemingly hinged upon such slight circumstances.

He that leadeth you is able abundantly and will keep you precious in his sight, and *will not suffer* you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear. How can we sufficiently appreciate the

love of God in Christ manifested to us in the rich provision for all who "do the will of the Father," in the supply of meat in due season. "Blessed be that servant; he is worthy to have charge of all the goods."

Love to all the household of faith and to yourself and Sister Russell particularly.

Yours,
H. L. GILLIS.

Ohio.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – Brother Wise and myself are pushing the battle. Many are becoming awakened on these questions which are so dear to us. There is an increasing demand for reading matter, especially Old Theology Tract No. 1.

Last evening we held a street service. People crowded us almost to suffocation for Tracts and Slips, and some wanted DAWN. We expect to open a building for meetings soon. In the midst of reproach and evil speaking we are "looking unto Jesus." Pray for us.

F. DRAPER.
