

[R4101 : page 366]

"GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD"

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

Should you think well to make use of this in the TOWER please do not use my name. It is a copy of a letter I sent to a brother, a stranger, who twice addressed me requesting charity. Yours in the Lord,

C_____.

MY DEAR BROTHER: –

Your letter of some weeks ago and also your later one came duly to hand, and though I feel I did quite right in making no reply to your first letter, yet now that you have taken the trouble to address me twice on the same subject I will give you my understanding of the Lord's will in regard to the matter discussed.

First let me say that I take no exceptions to the style or composition of your letters. On the contrary they disclose a very unusual talent for writing, and my only regret is that this talent should have found expression in a way that is so little calculated to glorify the Lord or his cause, or to really benefit you or anybody else. I remind you that all our talents belong to him if we are truly his, and that these talents ought never to be exercised in any manner which would reflect upon his ability to care for his own, but on the contrary should be directed into channels such as would provide an honest livelihood for ourselves and our families and additionally enable us to give something toward the spread of the Lord's Truth and the blessing of his people. It is not yet too late for you to make a proper use of the talent you possess in letter-writing, nor for the Lord to aid you in making it a source of honorable income if devoted to worthy ends.

I trust you are not mistaken, dear brother, in your confidence that if any man goes to the Kingdom he will be sure to meet you there; but I remind you that the Scriptures are very explicit on the point that the only ones who will ever get there will be the ones who DO the will of our heavenly Father as expressed in his Word, and that many, very many, who now have unbounded confidence that they will be accepted of the Lord are sure to hear the words, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity, I never approved of you." The fact that one has been fed on the loaves and fishes broken by the Lord's hands is no guarantee whatever that he will be accounted worthy to be the Lord's joint-heir in his Kingdom.

These matters are stated thus plainly to you, dear brother, because as a diligent student of the Word you must be very familiar with the Scriptures, which declare that "I have been young, and now I am old, and yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread"; "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly"; "All things work together for good to them that love God"; "His bread and water shall be sure"; "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things"; "Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed", and a host of others of like import.

And it ought not to be necessary additionally for me to call your attention to the fact that there is not one solitary passage in the Lord's Word that would justify you or any other brother in Christ in asking alms of anybody except the great Dispenser of all blessings upon whose never-failing bounty we all subsist. To whom did the Lord Jesus instruct us that we should raise the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread"? Of whom is it said that if we lack we may ask and he "Giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not"?

Furthermore, it would be quite as improper for me to respond to your appeal for alms as it was for you to make **[R4101 : page**

367] the appeal. Why? Because the statement is clear from the Scriptures that we should be on the lookout for wolves, swine and dogs, and the predominant characteristic of all these creatures is hunger, selfish rapacity, which would greedily devour not only the food of the Lord's true sheep but the very sheep themselves, if given the opportunity; and the Lord has instructed his people not to be led about by every suggestion that may come to them (for the devil is just as busy in making suggestions as he ever was) but to be "Wise as serpents and harmless as doves," testing every question – even this question of alms to the needy – by the Scriptures and by them alone.

It is not for me to say why the Lord has permitted poverty to come to you, dear brother. I have never seen you, and have no knowledge of you whatever beyond what is contained in your letters, but it is barely possible that the chief reason for your poverty is that instead of "Working with your hands the things which are good, that you may have to give to him that needeth," you have been of the class that are mentioned by the Apostle as content to live on the bounty of others, "Working not at all." I hope this is not the case, but there is nothing in your letters to indicate that such may not be true.

Your brother in Christ,

C _____.
