

GROWTH IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

The Apostle enjoins, "Humble yourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Following this advice I write to say that I fear that some of the matters reported to you respecting me were at least partially true. I have always sought to have a conscience void of offense toward God, but fear that I neglected the after part of that text – "and toward men." I have been inclined to please myself and to have others recognize my ideals and standards of thought, word and deed, whereas I should have sought, rather, to have my every word and deed such that everyone, saint and sinner, would have approved – had that been possible.

The third item of the Vow, which I read daily, should have helped me on this point had I gotten the full force of it, as I now do. How plainly it states and emphasizes the matter: "I vow to thee that I will still more carefully, if possible, scrutinize my every thought and word and deed, to the intent that I may be the better enabled to *serve* thee and *thy dear flock*." Why did I not see that satisfying my own conscience was not enough; I should have been prompt to cut off any liberty (though cherished as a right hand), if thereby I might more efficiently serve the flock of God for whom Christ died.

I now perceive that the Adversary's trap lay in drawing *inferences* and putting subtle meanings on words – somewhat as the Christian Scientists do, but not to so great an extreme. My brain structure naturally leads me toward the mystic, the symbolic, and occult. Doubtless I would have been swallowed up with occultism and spiritism had it not been for the Truth. I still had several books on things occult when the

Vow came out; and when I took the Vow I burned those books. I now see, however, that I did not entirely rid my mind of the influence of those books – they still influenced my reasoning.

I now resolve afresh, dear Brother Russell, that my influence shall be all it possibly can be for the Lord and for his flock. I have resolved that following your advice and example I shall hereafter stick closer than ever to the Word and also to the Vow – in their letter and spirit.

I heartily appreciate your kind admonitions, and pray God that they may not only bless me, but also through my ministries help many of the Lord's dear household of faith. And I here suggest that if in your judgment this very letter might be helpful to others, I am quite agreeable to your publishing it.

Relying upon the grace promised to help in every time of need, and upon the merit of the precious blood presented on my behalf on the part of our great Advocate for our sins (I John 2:1), I remain, beloved Brother Russell,

Yours in our dear Redeemer, our Sin-Offering,

M. L. HERR.

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