

BROTHER RUSSELL'S EPISTLE TO PILGRIMS

In April the letter below was sent to the Pilgrim Brethren. Now we publish it for the benefit of all our readers, at the suggestion of some of the Pilgrims. One of these expresses his reasons for suggesting the publication of the letter, as follows: –

BELOVED BROTHER RUSSELL: – The sweet, Holy Spirit of the Master's Love and the tender care for the sacred interests of the Lord's flock shines out so beautifully in your letter to the Pilgrim Brethren that my heart responds in the same spirit to assure you that every item of your counsel is carefully noted.

The spirit of your letter is so overflowing with the love of the Master that it would seem to me that its publication in **THE WATCH TOWER** would serve the Cause most effectively.

(1) It would help all the friends of the Truth to see the beautiful relationship that exists between yourself and the Pilgrim Brethren and give a true expression of the animus prompting the service. Some of the friends quite overlook this and fail completely to grasp the loving relationship between yourself and the brethren in the field.

(2) It would enable all the friends to see that the Pilgrims are faithfully following the instructions of the Office when they call attention to the Colporteur service, the privileges of the Extension Work, the blessing of the family Manna at breakfast, and the interests of family worship. The endeavor thus to look after the interests of the dear "flock" is not a desire to make a record, or to show a spirit of officiousness, but is the humble love of the Master for His true "sheep," manifested unobtrusively in those who in His providence He entrusts with this service.

TO THE PILGRIM BRETHERN OF THE I.B.S.A.: –

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Redeemer! I often wish that I could meet you personally and say a few words and hear from you. I will take this opportunity of giving you my little message inaudibly and without the expense of a regular journey. I want to refresh your memories respecting some things which I have already said, but which, it appears, *will* slip from the memories of some of your number. My experience in the work and knowledge of conditions are the basis for the following counsels:

(1) Avoid as much as possible all unkind references to Christian ministers or others who differ from us in Bible interpretation. Preach the Gospel! Let its mighty power do the work. In referring to others, speak as sympathetically as possible, endeavoring to make apologies and allowances rather than to condemn, which is not our province. Avoid so far as possible all discussion of the immortality of the soul, the Trinity and our Lord's presence. The time may yet come for wrangling over these things, but we believe it has not yet arrived. Take your cue, please, from the DAWNS, TOWERS and sermons, and be sure to make your statements less rather than more pungent and specific. The people are prejudiced along these lines. Experience shows that they can be much better reached otherwise, and after they come to understand other matters of the Truth – when these matters so difficult for them become easy.

(2) By precept, as well as by example, you can help all of the dear friends along the lines mentioned and **[R5040 : page 184]** help the Cause much. The Truth has suffered more from the unwisdom of its friends than from anything its enemies have said.

(3) Continue to give my love to all the dear Classes and individuals in the Truth as you meet them. I love to think of you all as in a measure representatives of myself as well as of the Lord, and I believe that the friends get most good from the Pilgrim visits when they view them from this standpoint. Usually, except on Sundays, you will have plenty of time aside from the meetings to look after the lame,

halt, blind and sick of the "sheep" – to carry them crumbs of comfort, to help bind up their wounds, or to encourage them in the good way. I trust that this opportunity for service is not neglected. It is one of the most important. Sometimes a dear "sheep" will become entangled and cease to attend the meetings. It is a part of your shepherding work to look after just such cases – to hunt them up and to help them back to fellowship if possible, or, failing in this, to encourage them to remain loyal to the Lord whatever their outward conditions.

(4) As representatives of the Society, the friends will naturally inquire of you respecting the Colporteur work, the Volunteer work, etc., or, if they fail to ask and you see no activity along these lines, it would be your duty and privilege to bring up the question and inquire to what extent the service of the Lord is going forward. Make inquiries about Classes where they have a surplus of talent and encourage the Class Extension work. Keep in memory that you are not speaking for yourself merely nor especially, but that you are the Society's representative and, above all, along this line in your present work, the Lord's representative. Be careful, therefore, that your counsels shall be encouraging and helpful, being not carelessly given.

(5) As you go to the various homes please give the dear friends to understand that I have requested you to notice whether or not the HEAVENLY MANNA is used at breakfast, dinner, supper, or some time, and whether or not an opportunity is sought to have family worship or giving of thanks at the table. Assure them that our interest is not prompted by any other motive than that of their good. So sure do we feel that prayer and consideration of spiritual things is essential to spiritual growth that we fear that all the dear friends who allow business, pleasure, or anything to come between themselves and the Lord are separating themselves from the spirit of Divine fellowship which the Lord encourages. Remind them also at a convenient time of the great blessing that is being experienced by some in connection with the continuous reading of the Six Volumes of SCRIPTURE STUDIES

every year – ten to twelve pages a day. We are leaky vessels, and the Truth gradually ebbs away unless we replenish.

(6) It is our supposition that all who are deeply interested in the Present Truth and who see it from the viewpoint in THE WATCH TOWER are interested in the weekly sermons. We assume that they would be interested for their own sakes and interested additionally for the sake of millions of others who are being thus reached. All such will desire to have regularly some paper publishing the sermons. Generally we can supply them cheaper than they could otherwise obtain them.

But another matter should be borne in mind, namely, that their subscriptions should go to such paper or papers as need some encouragement – even though it should cost more – even though in some respects it should not be as pleasing to them as another. As it is, two or three papers have immense lists of our readers – far more than their share – while other papers get comparatively small encouragement and are always in danger of becoming discouraged and dropping the service. The best general rule for friends to follow is to send subscriptions to THE WATCH TOWER Office and to take the paper published nearest to their home, which carries the one or the three-column service – whichever they prefer. We make special mention of this because some of the dear friends have been unintentionally working at cross purposes in this matter, seeming not to recognize the wiser course.

This year we are planning for three General Conventions, and I hope that we can arrange that each of you shall have a chance to attend one of them. I am expecting to be at all, and therefore hope to see all of you. The location for the first of these will be near Warrensburg, Mo. (Chautauqua), June 1-8; the second at Toronto, Can., June 30-July 7, and the third at Washington, D.C., July 6-14. The object in having the three Conventions this year is to accommodate those who cannot travel so far as is necessary when there is only one Convention.

We shall expect about fifteen hundred at each of these Conventions – perhaps two thousand.

With much Christian love, your brother and servant in the Lord,

C. T. RUSSELL.

=====