

INTERESTING LETTERS

SERIOUS FAULTS NEEDING CORRECTION

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: -

For quite a while I have been desirous of writing to you of some matters which happen in some classes, yet I have not had the courage to do so for fear I might be in error. The matter, however, has come to my attention so often, and it seems to be so injurious to the Lord's cause, that I am impelled to drop a few lines, asking your pardon for whatever may seem to you as bad judgment on my part.

Some good brethren are elected as Elders; they are zealous to do the Lord's will. Berean meetings are tendered them and accepted. Some of these dear brethren seem to get the thought that it is important to "feed" outsiders, but not so important to "feed the flock of God." So often when one comes to a Berean meeting, the leader will say as he opens the meeting, "Dear friends, I am sorry to say that I have not looked over the lesson," or, "I was so busy doing thus and so that I do not know where the lesson begins." Often I have heard this remark by leaders: "The class is pretty well posted on these things, and it does not make much difference whether I know much about it or not."

This thought seems to make them careless and indifferent. It seems to be so distressing to have a good-sized class and then hear the leader make such remarks of ignorance. What is the result? The meeting opens; a question is asked. Brother A. gives his view, then Brother B., then Brother C., then Sister D., etc. The views apparently *conflict*. A brother who thinks he knows all about it, says, "***That is all wrong:*** it is thus and so"; then some more discussion follows; then the same brother again jumps up

and says, "***That is not right.***" The leader is embarrassed, and not having studied his lesson dares not say a word, and finally the question is passed by without any definite decision.

I notice that in some meetings some of the dear friends who are backward go home without opening their mouths, because they are not encouraged. Some who are well up are called upon to do all the talking, and sometimes the class has to sit and listen to a little debate between three or four.

Another matter: While it has been mentioned so many times in THE WATCH TOWER nevertheless some leaders, as well as the class, when they begin the lesson, have the question book in one hand and the STUDIES in the other. Since much reading is done, discussion is shut out, with the occasional remark, "It is so plain in the STUDIES that discussion is hardly necessary."

If these thoughts I have brought to your attention are out of the way, Brother Russell, kindly throw the letter in your waste basket. Nevertheless, until then, it shall be my earnest prayer to the Lord that something may drop from your guided pen which may correct these conditions and help the dear brother Elders to realize their responsibility in this branch of the Lord's service — feeding of the flock.

I daily remember you in my prayers, wishing God's comfort and strength in your trials and joys. With warm love,

Your Brother in the one Hope,

[If brethren chosen to be Elders are found incapable, it **[R5704 : page 175]** is the duty of the Class to elect others — perhaps some of ***less ability***, who, by ***study***, will be more ***helpful***. A good leader is not the one who talks too much, but the one who,

by coaching the diffident, will help them to the correct expression; or who, if the expressions are in his judgment incorrect, will very kindly suggest the proper thought without particularly calling attention to the mistaken views that have been presented – backing up his own expression with Scripture citations and citations from the "STUDIES."]

page 175

FOUND "THE SATISFYING PORTION"

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST: –

At our recent election we, wishing to manifest our approval and appreciation of your pastoral care over us, through the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, THE WATCH TOWER and visits of the Pilgrim brethren, unanimously elected you as our Pastor until such time as your services this side the veil shall have terminated.

It may never be possible for you to be personally present to look after our interests, but realizing that the Lord has so wonderfully blessed us through you, through the above-mentioned channels, we cannot do less in showing our appreciation of His tender watch care over us, than to acknowledge in the way we have the channel through which those blessings have flowed.

Words fail when we would express our gratitude to our Heavenly Father for His full and complete provision for His Very Elect!

When we stop to consider that many of us searched for years before we found the "satisfying portion," when we consider that the vast majority of the professed ministers of Christ are

unfaithful shepherds of the flock – "wolves in sheep's clothing" (Jeremiah 23:1-4), and that we despaired of ever finding the Truth because of the extent of the "famine" resulting from their unfaithfulness (Jude 12), we have cause for great rejoicing and thanksgiving that the Lord has raised up faithful shepherds who are not ruling with force and cruelty, but are feeding us in the green pastures of Truth and Love, free from all fear, undismayed and lacking nothing.

We esteem you very highly for your work's sake and fear we can never repay the debt of love we owe you. We assure you of our continually petitioning the Throne of Heavenly Grace for needed wisdom and strength to assist you from day to day, defending your character when "all manner of evil is spoken against you falsely for Christ's sake," as we have opportunity, and defending those principles of truth and righteousness which to your own heart are more precious than life itself.

Your brethren in Christ,

TWIN FALLS ECCLESIA. – *Idaho.*

[R5704 : page 175]

A JOYFUL EXPERIENCE

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

An experience which we recently had so filled our hearts with joy, it seems we must extend the blessing to you:

A sister requested me to go to the depot with her to distribute literature to passengers awaiting trains. I replied "Yes," but no sooner had the answer left my lips than various suggestions of the opposite spirit came to me. As we neared the station I felt "faint," but the thought of our prayer meeting text, "I keep my body

under," came to me and I was glad for an opportunity to overcome. Everyone received the papers with a smile or a "Thank you," which encouraged me. [R5705 : page 175]

I suggested that we go to the cemetery and leave "Where Are the Dead?" and "What Is the Soul?" in the open mausoleums, which we did. On the car we noticed a young man reading his Bible and left a paper for him. We had not gone far into the cemetery when we heard someone call, and found it was the young man coming, tract in hand. We had thought him a Training School student and expected a "lecture," but he asked if we were associated with the I.B.S.A., saying he had been trying to find our meeting place, and had wired the Head Office for information. Then we learned that a relative of his had taken home a tract from a public lecture, through which he had sent for STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, had read these, and started out to identify himself with a class.

We invited him to our home and to the evening meeting, from which a brother invited him home for the night. The following day he symbolized his consecration.

Our cup of blessing was running over! I was so happy that for a time I could not pray, but could think only of the Scripture, "In everything give thanks," **thanks**, THANKS! Had given out hundreds of tracts, but never had been so filled with the Spirit nor received such "wages."

We never cease praying the Lord's richest blessings for you, hoping soon we shall meet in the Kingdom.

It was from our dear Brother Rutherford that I received the first message of Truth over four years ago.

Your sister by His grace,

MRS. E. L. BENNETT. – *New York.*

INFIDEL THANKS GOD FOR PASTOR RUSSELL

DEAR PASTOR RUSSELL: –

It is with pleasure I take this opportunity to write and thank you for the comfort I have received from your STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. I will thank God for them as long as I have breath. I appreciate better than I can express the good work you are doing. I know that the Lord will reward you abundantly.

Although some of the preachers may try to paint you blacker than Satan, any man with a grain of common sense can see through their game. I am only a working-man with a limited education, and from what good I have received from your writings, I would be willing to stake life itself that you are not what your enemies paint you.

They say you are making infidels. We can thank God for such infidels (?). The sooner people get knocked off the creedal foundations, the sooner they will begin to build upon something solid, something reasonable.

I can say with positiveness that I know Pastor Russell's teachings are making Christians out of infidels, for I was an out-and-out infidel up to a few months ago. I feel that I would have remained so if I had not come in contact with the writings of Pastor Russell.

It was quite a few years ago that I made up my mind that death ended all, and that one would better get all he can out of life. But thanks be to God my eyes have at last been opened through the good Pastor of New York. I am now determined to do what I can to assist in spreading the Truth.

I should like some tracts that would assist evolutionists and Jews to an appreciation of the true doctrines of the Bible.

Brother Sargent, of Halifax, and Sister Mason, of the States, are doing a good work here. Please remember me in prayer.

Yours to win Christ,

J. A. TAYLOR. – *Nova Scotia*.

PROFITABLE BEREAN STUDIES

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

I have noticed in this and other parts of the country that some of the brethren leading Berean Studies seem to be under the impression that they are supposed to do a good deal of talking. Now, for the leader of a study to give a five-minute discourse on every question or remark is surely a mistake; rather he should see that his place is to see that the study is conducted in an orderly manner, endeavor to get expressions from as many as possible, and then with his own brief comment close the question.

Sometimes I have noticed, too, that there may be a brother in a class who has a good deal more ability than have the remainder. He will comment at length on every question and remark. Would it not be wiser for such a one to control his zeal that others not so able may feel more free to express their thoughts? We say sometimes that "brevity is the soul of wit." Brevity in our Berean Studies might be helpful all around. With much Christian love,

Yours in our Lord,

F. H. HARRISON.

ANSWER TO ABOVE.

[We agree that a leader of a Berean Class, to be most helpful, should draw the answers from the Class – otherwise the brethren might nearly as well each read for himself at home. We have endeavored to give this thought in STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. VI. We cannot, however, agree with the writer above that the leader's comments should always be very brief. There might be questions which the most skillful leader would not be able properly to draw answers from the Class. In such cases, after doing one's best, the proper course would be for the leader to answer the question very thoroughly, but in as brief form as possible. Indeed, all of the answers or suggestions should be brief and to the point. Any one addicted to the habit of long talks on every question should be kindly reminded of proprieties by the leader in a private way at first, but, if necessary, in a kindly way before the Class. If he still persists, an alternative would be to ask the questions of different members of the Class by name, giving only a fair opportunity, and to avoid calling for general answers. This, however, is not desirable if it can be avoided.]
