

INTERESTING LETTERS

LEARNING THE TRUE SECRET OF TRIALS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

Joyous greetings in the name of our blessed Master. For many months I have desired to write to thank you for all the help I have received through STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, THE WATCH TOWER, etc.

In THE WATCH TOWER of April 15th, 1915, you published an article on "Love," desiring to know the progress made by those who particularly desired the growth of the chiefest of spiritual graces. At that time I was on a bed of sickness and much pain. The message of joy and peace which that WATCH TOWER brought to me I can never fully express in words. I longed to grow more in love, and I prayed earnestly that the Lord would grant my desire. He has, more abundantly than I had thought possible.

I have learned that trials and difficulties, under Divine providence, are intended to develop our characters and to make us copies of the Master, thus preparing us for the Kingdom and for the great work of blessing others. They are but stepping stones, helping our progress in the narrow way of self-sacrifice, helping us to draw closer to the Lord, recognizing His hand in all life's affairs toward "the called ones according to His Purpose." There is an advantage in every trial, if rightly received. I have learned that they really assist us to put on the whole Armor of God, assist us in growing in the graces of the Spirit and especially in this crowning grace of "Love"; and not only in Love, but in *patient endurance*. They help us to tread faithfully in the footsteps of our Lord until the Kingdom, for which the Church has prayed so long, is attained.

I have learned, too, that sometimes matters which seem dark clouds and insurmountable difficulties, under His loving Hand are but messengers bidding me to "yet closer draw"; for "He would embrace my care"; and that if loving Him and trusting Him, I must "lean hard."

"He loves me too well to forsake me,
Or to give me a trial too much."

With the knowledge of His love and care I go on my way rejoicing, praying Him to continue His good work begun in me, and to grant by His grace that I may do nothing to hinder it.

I pray daily for you, that God may graciously guide and preserve you, and continue the blessing you have heretofore bestowed. With much Christian love,

Your sister in the Master,

MABEL STEWARD. – *S. Africa.*

[R5954 : page 271]

WORDS FAIL TO EXPRESS HER GRATITUDE

DEARLY BELOVED PASTOR AND BROTHER: –

Having been told by a brother in the Truth that my experience would make your heart glad, I am writing, although I fear I cannot put into words my gratitude for this great joy which has come into my life through the I.B.S.A. I was always longing for more light until God sent someone about a year ago to open the eyes of my understanding. I had a severe struggle with doubts and fears, as to whether this was what I had craved or whether the Church of England and others were mistaken.

For years I had been feeling very sick of what seemed to me such shallowness in our religion; but oh, I did not then understand the Love of God; how can I thank Him for His wondrous love! I now love and understand my Bible and am hoping this new year may bring this joy to others who are Truth-hungry as I was.

I enjoy the WATCH TOWERS and pass them on to others who are interested. I saw the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, and although I could not deny its power, sixteen years of Church-of-England teaching then had a hold upon me from which I thank God I am now free. I hope to be baptized very soon.

With heart-felt love for your work in His name, I am

Your Sister in the Truth,

PRISCILLA COMPTON. – *Eng.*

WHEN DIVORCED PEOPLE ARE FREE TO MARRY

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

I am well aware that Volume VI., STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, seems to touch every phase of the experiences, difficulties and proper course of action of the Lord's people of the New Creation; nevertheless, a question has arisen which is causing some perplexity in our Class and threatens a division. A Brother and a Sister, members of our Class, have always enjoyed our fellowship, until now it is learned that the Sister was previously married, and that her first husband is still living and has remarried.

Some of our Class desire to disfellowship this Brother and Sister and to forbid their attendance at the meetings. The main contention is based upon the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:9 – "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and

shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." In the case mentioned it is claimed that the Sister's first husband had been guilty of adultery; but others claim that this would not release her for remarriage; for Jesus said that whosoever marrieth a divorced woman (whether properly divorced or not) would be committing adultery. Please give us a little more light on these points.

Very truly your Brother,

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[The Class is evidently making a mistake in allowing the matter here presented to cause any division or disturbance. In any event they would seem to have no ground for forbidding attendance at meeting. The very most they might vote would be to withdraw fellowship and include in this a refusal to visit at their home or to invite them to the homes of the Class – the Class declining also to appoint the Brother to any office, such as Deacon or Elder. As for refusing them the privilege of attending public meeting, that would be very inconsistent; for surely all kinds of people living in all kinds of sin come occasionally to meetings, and we hope that by coming they may be benefited and recovered.

In this case, where it is admitted that adultery was the basis of divorce and that the fault was with the husband, it plainly comes within the exception mentioned by our Lord – "except for adultery." Besides, if that had not been originally the cause of the separation, the fact that the former husband had *remarried* signifies that he had considered the marriage tie broken; and therefore the first wife was released from its obligation. Evidently the Sister whose case you cite has both of these proofs on her side and had every right, therefore, to have married, if she thought that the wisest and proper thing to do.

It is not supposable that our Lord meant merely a separation between husband and wife; for St. Paul counsels that if the unbeliever depart, let him depart – do not consider it a hardship, but rather take it as a blessing. He does not say that the departing of the husband or wife would be a divorce. A divorce is a full breaking of the original marriage contract. Jesus was criticizing the too slack observance of the marriage tie, and condemning it. He declared that the marriage contract could not be fully broken except by adultery.

In our day these matters are regulated by courts. Very properly, Bible Students govern themselves additionally by the Word of God. The fact that a court would grant a divorce would not by a Bible Student be considered liberation from the marriage bonds, unless upon the one ground which the Master specified. But a court divorce is to be respected when it is backed by the condition of adultery – or backed by a second marriage of the separated one.]

CHANGED ATTITUDE TOWARD SPIRITISM

DEAR SIR: –

I am obliged for your book on Spiritism and several papers on this and other subjects. Since writing you, I have gotten in touch with your branch at Lancaster Gate, London, and have purchased from them twelve booklets and the first volume of your Series, THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES, besides matter on other subjects of interest. Owing to delay in foreign money orders, I will continue to get books from your London branch.

I have now carefully read your book on SPIRITISM, and can say that I agree with it entirely. I find your explanations in accord with reason and also my eight years' investigation of "Modern Spiritism," with which I am not now connected.

Through your SPIRITISM book my wife and I have changed our attitude toward Spiritism. We were developing very quickly, and my wife was a clairaudient, clairvoyant and trance medium, while she appeared to have materialistic faculties. I had not developed far, but was likely to become a trance medium and had several experiences and was conscious of presences in normal times.

I think your book not at all overdrawn, and believe Spiritism is demoralizing, anti-Christian and the effort and work of demon spirits.

Your SPIRITISM book has enlightened me on many things I could not quite see through, and though an investigator I was not blind to everything that went on around me, as are most of the attendants at "circles."

I have sent several of your books to friends whom I had interested in Spiritism and shall send to others in due time.

Yours faithfully,

ERNEST E. NOBLE. – *England.*

page 271

A GREAT CHANGE OF MIND

MY DEAR PASTOR RUSSELL: –

For a long time I have wanted to write you, but up to now have hesitated, lest I should trespass on your valuable time too much, knowing that you are very busy. But I would do violence to my conscience if I did not tell you that only a few years ago I despised even to look at your picture, and for years would not read a line written by you! Our Father knows them that are His, and He knows

exactly how to deal with them to bring them into subjection to His will.

In 1910 dear Sister Lentz, who is now with our dear Master, led me into the Present Truth, by leaving the Fifth Volume in my office, requesting me to examine it. This I did after telling her a lie about it. Before opening the book I got down on my knees and asked my Heavenly Father to guide me. I got up and read two chapters, with Bible in hand, when I received such a blessing, that when the Sister called the next morning I asked if she had any more books like that, what was the price and how soon could I have them. She gave the price and I handed her the money, and told her to bring them at once; for I had found what I had been looking for for years. Yet I objected to taking the Vow; but continuing to read, I decided that I would best take it; and now I do not see how I could get along without it. The most helpful clause in it, to me is, "I vow to further scrutinize my thoughts, words and doings."

I will close by thanking you for being the instrument in God's hand of leading me into the *absolute Truth*. Pray for me! With Christian love, I am

YOUR BROTHER, ——— M.D.

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