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PASTOR RUSSELL'S RELATION TO THE PILGRIMS

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I am now standing at the bier of one whom, since the days of the Apostle Paul, God has more widely used in His service than He has any other person. I am standing at the bier of one who has been to me a brother and a friend, having done me more good than all other people that have ever come into touch with me. I am standing at the bier of one whom I have loved more than I ever loved any other human being. I am standing at the bier of one of whom I have the assurance of faith that he is now in glory with our adorable Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. One can realize, therefore, how hard it is to control one's feelings under circumstances like these.

I have been asked to speak of the relation of Pastor Russell to the Pilgrims. He had two relations to them – an official and a personal relation. His official relation to the Pilgrims can be understood when we recognize the office to which the Lord was pleased to call him, i.e., to be the special channel for giving the "meat in due season," as well as for arranging and directing the work of the [R6007 : page 367] Household of Faith. The Pilgrims, therefore, were related to him as fellow-servants of the same God. Therefore as God's representatives, and also in a sense as Brother Russell's representatives, they traveled throughout the world preaching the "Glad Tidings." Just as Moses was given as his colaborers the Seventy to whom God gave the Spirit that he had put upon Moses, because the work was too much for Moses to perform alone, so our Heavenly Father was pleased to give to this devoted servant of His colaborers to assist him in the labor of dispensing meat to the whole Church; for this work was too great for him alone to perform. Therefore the Pilgrims were to bear part of the burden and toil that were his. They, therefore, in a certain sense represent him. In writing to them he at times reminded them that he loved to

think and speak of them as being in a certain sense his representatives, though recognizing them primarily as the Lord's representatives.

It was this office, therefore, that gave him a close and directing relation to the Pilgrims. He was eminently fitted by nature, by grace, and by experience to fill the demands of this place. He had a giant intellect with marvelous perceptive faculties, remarkable memory and clear, deep and true reasoning powers, combined with an exceptional knowledge of human nature and with tactful aggressiveness. These gave him great executive ability, which, of course, eminently fitted him to direct the work of the Pilgrims. Our Heavenly Father endowed him with a natural disposition, especially in his religious capacities, that very few of the fallen human race have had. Under careful cultivation of the Holy Spirit these natural capacities were developed in a most remarkable degree into a character that had and combined all the qualities necessary to discharge the duties, responsibilities and privileges of his official relation to the Pilgrims.

His experience as a Pilgrim fitted him all the better to exercise properly and profitably the functions of this part of his office. Therefore his relation to the Pilgrims officially was that of directing their work. It was God's will that he should be the human agent whom God would use to select the Pilgrims. In the selection of these servants no arbitrariness nor partiality was used. His will was fully submitted to the Father's will as to how their selection should be conducted. He subjected the Pilgrims to the three tests demanded by God's Word as proper to be placed upon public servants of God. First of all he required of them that, in addition to a full consecration, they have a large degree of loving zeal, deep humility, exemplary meekness and an accurate knowledge of God's Word. He further required that they have in a large degree the talents necessary for teaching and preaching the Word of God clearly, acceptably and winsomely to responsive hearts. Lastly he required their

providential situation to be such as would enable them in harmony with the Word to assume the duties, responsibilities and privileges of the Pilgrim service. When these three things met in an individual, Brother Russell was very glad to arrange for his having a part in the Pilgrim service. His methods in selecting such were quite unique; e.g., unobserved, he listened to a Brother, whom he did not know, explain the chart to several of the friends. The explanation was so clear that he inquired who that Brother was. Finding out his name he entered into correspondence with him, inviting him to enter the Pilgrim service. Those who were to be given the privilege of this office were subjected by him to certain tests that would demonstrate the possession or lack of meekness, humility, zeal, clearness in presenting the Truth, and a large measure of love and self-control.

His instructions to the Pilgrims were very simple. He believed that few instructions were better than many. A Pilgrim, on starting out asked him, "Brother, have you some word of instruction, encouragement or caution to give to me that will prove helpful to me in the service?" He answered, "No; Brother." Then thinking a while he said, "Yes; Brother, I have. Be full of loving zeal and deep humility, and everything will be well." He was wont to say, 'If you are in any difficulty or if you have a problem which you cannot solve, remember you always have an open ear and a willing hand here.'

He allowed as much liberty to the Pilgrims as the good of the Cause and themselves warranted. He allowed them to choose their subjects and to use their way of presenting the message, not wishing to interfere with their individuality, believing the Lord was directing with respect to each one. Only such restrictions were made as were necessary for the profit of the Cause and its participants. Whenever correction was necessary it was given in a remarkably sweet form. One of the Pilgrims asked for too frequent vacations, alleging that he needed more time for study. Brother Russell, feeling that the Brother should have had more zeal, suggested that the Brother take

a year's time off from the Pilgrim service for study. The Brother, catching the Pastor's meaning, immediately declared, "Brother, that would be a loss of too much time. I will go right on."

He was always on the alert to encourage others; and no Pilgrim left his presence without being encouraged, if he was in an encourageable condition of heart and mind. When correction was needed, it was given with the greatest tact and leniency, allowances being made for good intentions. Whenever he had any changes to make, promotions or demotions in the service, they were made not from personal reasons, but because of the principles in the Heavenly Father's Word. His course was that of completely sinking his will into the Lord's will and of searching to find out what that will was in relation to each Pilgrim, that he might be able the better to help him in the good work. Whenever a dismissal from the work had been arranged for, it was done in the most tactful and quiet way, that others would not need to realize the reason, nor the Pilgrim experience unnecessary pain. The person was in a [R6007 : page 368] very gentle and loving way invited to enter some other field of activity, to the glory of God and his own profit.

His attitude toward the Pilgrim work was one full of encouragement to the Pilgrims. One of his greatest services to them was his example of faithful service. This influenced them in many ways, even in tone and gesture. Undoubtedly the Pilgrims will remember with joy the thought that as his first Harvest work was that of a Pilgrim, so his last Harvest labor was Pilgrim work.

But we are not to think that his official relation to the Pilgrims was all there was in his relation to them. He was not an official simply, nor one that no one could approach. He was a most lovable and considerate person, always inviting confidence. In addition to his official relation he sustained a many-sided personal relation to the Pilgrims. First of all, he was like a faithful father to them. Not having natural children, he was blessed by the Lord in begetting

many spiritual children with the Truth; even as the Apostle Paul said he did in the case of many. Brother Russell introduced many people into the Lord's family, and not a few of the Pilgrims were among these. A Pilgrim recently remarked, "I never consciously had a father, until I entered the Pilgrim service and came in direct contact with Brother Russell."

He was not only a father, but also an elder Brother to the Pilgrims, always ready to stand side by side with them. Therefore he was not regarded solely with the feeling that people should have for a father. As elder Brother, he inspired the Pilgrims with confidence in, together with respect for, himself. He was, furthermore, a true friend. He did not whimsily take one up today and drop him tomorrow. He was faithful to his friends with a loyalty based upon the good Word of God. Every Pilgrim recognized that he could depend upon the friendship of this beloved servant. He was an affectionate companion.

Our dear Brother Sturgeon told us a little while ago how he showed his comradeship to the last. He was also a most sympathetic comforter. Any one in distress, especially spiritual distress, seeking comfort, would find in him an attentive ear, a sympathizing heart, a cheering word and an encouraging thought. By nature he was very richly endowed with sympathy and by grace this was more highly developed than the majority of his other qualities. This enabled him to enter into the feelings of so many when they came to him with the things that pressed them sorely. This made him a sympathizing comforter.

Furthermore, this good servant of God was an optimistic well-wisher. He always put the best construction on everything. He gave each one credit for good intentions. His desires and expectations were that these beloved colaborers of his might have a glorious entrance into the blessed Kingdom into which we feel sure that he has entered, who was called by the Lord not only "wise," but also

"faithful." He was a cheerful helper. Nothing pleased him more than to serve others. He was continually thinking and planning how he could help by counsel, by example, and by deeds. Every rightly disposed person who came in contact with him was refreshed and encouraged. He was always thinking, not of himself, but of others. That is why his death was so glorious. He had thought that he would probably pass away as a martyr. In many respects his death has been more glorious than a martyr's; for to him was given the privilege not to allow a large measure of his life to be taken from him by violence, but to use up every ounce of his strength in service, for he died in the harness. Such a death was best for him. God will decide what kind of a death is best for each.

[Addressing the remains, the speaker said: O servant of the Lord, in prophetic type God called thee Eldad, beloved [R6008 : page 368] of God. Beloved of God wast thou while in the flesh, art now in the spirit, and to all eternity shalt be. Thou hast been also beloved of God's people, art now and shall forever be. Therefore we name thee Ameldad, Beloved of God's people.]

We can no longer pray for our Brother, as we have, day by day, "God bless our beloved Pastor." But, Beloved, we can pray with respect to him that God bless his memory. He is beyond the need of our prayers; but oh, Beloved, let us not leave a vacancy in our prayers where we were wont to pray, "God bless our beloved Pastor." Let us, in that place, pray "God bless the *memory* of our beloved Brother Russell." Who among us will join with the speaker in the resolution daily to pray with respect to him, God bless the memory of our beloved Brother? Oh, let the Israel of God everywhere daily pray GOD BLESS HIS MEMORY!

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