

"BLESSED ARE YE WHEN MEN SHALL REVILE YOU"

BY FRANK W. MANTON – TORONTO

Unexpectedly I have the honor of representing the Toronto, Ont., Ecclesia here this afternoon in paying the last tribute of esteem to the memory of our Beloved Pastor. Three hundred or more of the Toronto Ecclesia, together with many sympathizers, are rejoicing today in the fact that our Beloved has triumphantly finished his course.

But we have no apologies to make for sadness. We remind you of our Lord, when at Bethany at the tomb of Lazarus; we read that even "Jesus wept."

Under the circumstances you will pardon a personal reference. About nine years ago I was brought into contact with the Truth, and accepted it in a measure, as most of us do at first, reservedly. I was prepared to meet our Beloved Pastor on his first visit to Toronto after my contact with the Truth with some degree of prejudice. We had heard so much about "Brother Russell" that we had considered it in a large measure a form of hero worship; and not being a hero-worshiper, I received him with these thoughts in view.

Being invited to dine with him at the hotel with other friends, I was on the alert to find, if possible, some flaw; but, to my great surprise, I never met a character in every way so beyond reproach.

Immediately after dinner, having to take the car for the public meeting, I endeavored to carry his hand-bag, but he was too quick for me. Before that day was over my prejudice had melted as the hoar frost before the morning sun.

Another incident which impressed me happened some years ago. Sitting at my desk one day, I received a telegram: "Will you

serve as Chairman at my Ottawa meeting?" I thought, Now I have found him in a mistake! He had never heard me speak in public, because I had never attempted to do so. I did not reply to the telegram for several days, meantime counseling with my wife.

I overcame my hesitation and wired back, "Yes." After the telegram had gone and the end of the week had come, and it was time for me to go, my wife pointed out that there was something in Brother Russell's telegram that I had overlooked. I tried to ignore that fact, but after the discourse in Ottawa, when our Beloved Pastor was bowing himself off the platform, he lifted his hands and said, "Mr. F.W. Manton, of Toronto, will lecture in the Family Theater here next Sunday afternoon."

Dear friends, I was not an Elder, I had never spoken in public, and I thought, I have him now; he has again made a mistake! I struggled with my feelings during the following week – almost struggled myself out of the Truth. Dear friends, he did not make a mistake in the Lord's sight, I am sure; I am striving to do my best in His service, and if it had not been for our dear Pastor's keen insight, I might never have had this privilege.

The third and most vivid impression was made upon me by our Pastor recently. You were all moved to indignation, no doubt, when you learned that the gates of Canada were unjustly closed to our dear Pastor. I had the honor of standing with him in the Toronto Union Depot when word was received that he would not be allowed to address further public meetings in Canada.

The righteous indignation of those present there was stirred; we wanted to demand what right the authorities had to shut out a Christian gentleman who had in no way dishonored himself or his cause, and who had every right to speak. He merely said, "I will not go where I am not wanted. If they want me, I will come." There was not the least note of resentment in his words. We were rebuked, by his example, for our resentment. We had been tempted to reclaim

the life-rights which we had laid down in sacrifice; we were not citizens of that country, but of the Heavenly one!

Especially would I bring to the notice of the Elders of the various Ecclesias at this time the beautiful picture of [R6009 : page 370] "The Sheep in the Storm" – how they are huddled together, head to head, for safety and protection. Let us keep this in mind. It was the first thought that came to me when I fully realized that our Beloved Brother had passed beyond the Veil. The next thought was of joy, born of the assurance that he is now part of the glorified Body of The Christ, and beyond the reach of his enemies!

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you *falsely* for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven."

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