

"GOD FIRST – SELF LAST"

BY G.C. DRISCOLL – DAYTON

No greater honor could come to me than to stand here as the delegate of the Dayton, Ohio, Ecclesia, who have elected our dear Brother annually for many years as their beloved Pastor, whom we recognized as a special servant of God. He was doing a special work at this time, and we certainly learned to love him. For years I have been intimately associated with our dear Pastor as his publicity representative and for the Society. It has been my special privilege to arrange with newspapers in various countries for the publication of his sermons, and also to interview editors throughout the world in respect to his personal work; and, dear friends, as one who knew him intimately, I am glad to be here to say that he was nothing if not a thorough-going, conscientious, sincere Christian, whose greatest endeavor was to serve the Lord, the Truth and the brethren.

I know that he has been assailed many times unjustly; and it was my special privilege often for at least seven years to defend his character. When his sermons were first syndicated, Brother Russell refused to permit his portrait to be used in connection with them. He was very modest in that respect. He felt that he was entitled to the privacy of his own picture; that it should not be paraded before the public. But the newspaper editors, who were glad to get his sermons, could not be ignored; and the demand was uniform that they should have it, that they should be privileged to publish it in connection with his sermon. Brother Russell finally gave his consent; for he came to the conclusion that by the publication of his picture, he would get a wider reading for his Message, the Message of God, the Message regarding the Kingdom. For this reason, and this alone, he gave his consent.

As for the picture, there has been no man in this age to equal our dear Brother. He was an outstanding figure in a crowd. No matter whether he was seated in a train or in a street car or was walking on the street, people would stop and turn around to get a second look. Many a time I have heard people say that he looked like the Lord, if ever a man did. His very appearance widened his influence for the glory of God. As his influence grew, the opposition also grew, and they learned to hate that picture because he stood for something different from what they did. I remember one preacher stating that he could not pick up a paper to read the news without having Pastor Russell stare him in the face.

POSSIBLY MORE THAN IN THE PAST

Now, my friends, this was all distasteful to our dear Brother. But the Message of the Kingdom was thus brought before the people, and he had evidences day by day, many times over, that the people were receiving a blessing. In that way he received a blessing also; and the use of his portrait gave the Message of the Love of God wider use in various ways.

Now that this noble face is soon to be covered to be seen no more, we can confidently say, "This mortal has put on immortality." This wonderful character was sown in weakness, but we are sure that it was raised in power. He has served us in many ways. His picture has also served us in many ways in the past; and I am sure if we give the cooperation which we now shall have the opportunity to give, by the Lord's grace, we can still use his personality and his picture possibly more than in the past.

