

DISCOURAGEMENTS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS

(A Reprint article 2827 with comments at the end by Br. Ted Smith)

None are so strong as not to need encouragements in the present time, when all who would be of the “royal priesthood” are required to “walk by faith, and not by sight.” We feel this frequently in the WATCH TOWER office, and know from your inquiries that all laborers in the vineyard are on the lookout for fruits of their labors. You as well as we sometimes wonder that the hundreds of tons of literature and other efforts on behalf of the truth, emanating from this office, do not yield larger results.

Recently, while feeling considerably discouraged that the “Volunteer Work” seemed to show small results, the Lord lifted the veil a little, and showed us that a GREATER work was in progress under the surface, than we would have surmised. And as this encouraged us, we now relate the same for the encouragement of our co-laborers. First a Presbyterian minister called at our office and renewed his WATCH TOWER subscription and, expressing himself quite warmly in approval, said: Go on, Brother Russell, a greater work is being done than you can possibly be aware of; I know it, because the ministers express themselves freely to me. The Truth is taking effect in every direction. Be of good courage.

This did encourage us, especially when we reflected that this very minister has never openly confessed the truth, so far as we know—“for fear of the Jews.” Shortly afterward, when at the Toledo Convention, a brother from Indiana encouraged us greatly by relating one of his experiences. He said, “I had finished distributing the ‘Volunteer TOWER’ in my town and wondered that I saw no fruit of my labors, when one day a young man came to my bakery and asked if I had not distributed WATCH TOWERS at the Methodist church, and if I could not let him have some more of them. I asked what for? He replied that at a recent meeting of their Epworth League their new pastor brought up the subject of hell, and made some remarks upon it, and then threw it open for discussion. Thereupon one after another, some five or six of the Leaguers, arose and disavowed their former belief in hell—denying that the Bible taught it and giving reasons. The pastor arose in surprise, and inquired where they had gotten their ideas, and was told that they had read them in ZION’S WATCH TOWER. Others who had not received them, then wanted copies of the Tower. Of course I supplied the young man gladly.”

As a further encouragement for you all—as showing that the DAWNS and tracts are doing SILENT WORK— we mention that every now and then we hear from some who have been reading the DAWN, and studying the Bible with their assistance for years, yet somehow had never before written to us for further reading matter, nor to glorify God on behalf of the light they had received and were rejoicing in. We give below a letter just received which has greatly encouraged us along these lines. It shows, also, how the truth

can take hold of the heart, at as early an age as ten years. It should encourage those who have charge of children to teach them the truth. The child mind is more logical often at ten, than later, when the sophistries of its elders confuse it, by teaching that *death* and *destruction* are synonymous with everlasting life in torment. Assist the children to a knowledge of the Lord and the truth, and encourage them to right views of life favorable to a full consecration to the Lord. The letter follows:

DEAR SIR:—I would begin with an apology if I were not sure you must be used to such letters by this time, and perhaps expect them from all deeply interested in the truth which you expound. I beg pardon beforehand if I am too tedious and diffuse. I will try to be as brief as possible. I was a very small child (10 years) when your publications were first introduced into our family, through the kindness of Mr. Henry Weber of Oakland, who was then my brother's Sunday School teacher, and whose name I cannot mention without the sincerest gratitude.

I cannot say what drew my attention to your writings, they were never forced upon me in any way, but I have been an insatiable reader ever since I learned how, and when *Food for Thinking Christians* came in I devoured it with the avidity of a healthy, unspoiled appetite. I was then so little that I had never received any but the most general religious instruction. I do not remember to have read any doctrinal works or heard any doctrinal discussions, but since my earliest recollections I had been taught, and realized as by a natural instinct, that the first object in life is to be good and learn the will of God.

I would like to describe the impressions your writings made upon me, but it would be egotistical waste of space, and perhaps seem overstrained, as I was so young. I only want you to know that from childhood I have been familiar with your interpretation of the Scriptures, and acknowledged it as truth. The TOWER has been a regular visitor to our home for so long that I think I have seen it in all its different dresses; and all the volumes of DAWN I have read and re-read many times. Of course, as I grew older, I no longer accepted statements implicitly. I am naturally a student and I have thought and questioned and investigated deeply about these things, but always with the result of being more firmly convinced of the correctness of the views I criticized.

In my tenth summer I made a voluntary dedication of myself to the Lord. I think it was an intelligent offering, certainly I have never since wished to recall it. The one object of my life is to make my calling and election sure. The only thing that seems of real importance to me is my success in this. Yet I am often very perplexed to know what is required of me, just now. The practice of the Christian graces, the necessary transformation of my own character to the image of the Son, is clear enough. I can work at that daily, with some evidence of success; for though I am continually shocked at the roots of sin and folly I find in myself, yet for a long time I have been accustomed to look at all things from God's standpoint, approve what I think he approves, and condemn

where he condemns, both in private affairs and in matters of the world.

So far, then, as the discipline of my own “new nature” is concerned, the way is plain, though toilsome; but when I begin to look about me and ask, What part can I take in the present harvest work? everything is confused and I seem tied hand and foot. I read in the TOWER of other workers, but none seem situated as I am.

In my own circle of relatives and friends I have tried to be a witness for the truth, though I am afraid a very feeble one. Timidity is a fatal besetment to me, and the reluctance to seem to think myself wiser than my elders and betters.

One terribly severe trial I was enabled to undergo last spring. I withdrew from the denomination I had joined at fourteen. You may wonder why I ever did join it; but I was so young and ignorant, I thought only of acknowledging my Christianity, and really had no realization of binding myself to a particular sect. There is no word of the Confirmation service that I could wish to retract, but I was determined no longer to call myself an Episcopalian, so requested to have my name erased from the list of membership.

The pastor was most kind and considerate. He remonstrated, but being convinced that I was acting conscientiously agreed to do as I demanded, and announced the withdrawal at the next meeting of the congregation. I scarcely know how I went through with that ordeal. It seemed at first as impossible to make myself so conspicuous and shock so many of my family and friends. For, of course, almost everybody misunderstood. Except from sisters I have no sympathy and am quite alone. I know there are people in town who take the TOWER, but I do not know them.

Perhaps something may come about to change things in this respect. Several times when you have been in our city I have seen and heard you, but I could not go forward and introduce myself. I do not expect any special answer to this letter. I do not know what particular advice you could give me. But I thought perhaps I had done wrong in remaining entirely unknown and aloof, and that I ought to have some personal communication with the one to whose ministrations I owe so much.

Yours gratefully and respectfully, Edna Mary Hammond—Maryland.

Jan. 29, 1970

Dear Brethren:

I ran across this article yesterday when I was reading the article for the testimony meeting. It is found on Reprint page 2827 and in the June 1, 1901 Tower on page 189. It

impressed me very much, especially the wording which I underlined in the second paragraph, and the two words (SILENT WORK) which I underlined in the fourth paragraph. I thought you might enjoy reading the article so I copied it entire.

We too, may be doing a work that we may not know of the results until we get beyond the veil. As the Pastor said on Reprint page 5061, par. 6—“To some extent the divine blessing has attended our labors. Thousands of Christian people have been awakened, enlightened and brought back to the firm foundation of faith in God and in the Bible. Tens of thousands who have not come to a full consecration of their hearts to the Lord have, nevertheless (according to their letters), taken their stand for righteousness and truth, against sin and error. In these and through these to their families, friends and neighbors a testimony has gone out respecting ‘Love divine, all love excelling,’ which has brought many into closer relationship with God, to a greater reverence of his Word and to a considerable faith in respect to the divine plan of the ages. Hundreds of thousands no longer believe that God used his wisdom and power in human creation to bring into being thousands of millions doomed to eternal torture.”

Again, on page 5761, par. 4, the Pastor said: “The truth is designed, not only to perfect the ‘bride’ of Christ, the chief of the firstborns, but to develop the great company class, and also to be a witness to the whole world.”

So, as we continue to give out the First Volume, it is refreshing and encouraging to know that the message will accomplish everything the Lord intends, and much of that work may be “in progress under the surface” and a “silent work,” unknown to us, as far as outward results are concerned. Apropos to this read the poem entitled FOLLOW THE PATTERN on page 63 of the Poem Book.

Sincerely in Christ,
Bro. Ted Smith