

ONE OF GOD'S NOBLEMEN

BY W. E. VAN AMBURGH—NEW YORK

The pages of history record many of mankind who have left conspicuous footprints upon the sands of time. Some have been great within the boundaries of their local communities. Some have reached out to the national borders. Others have leaped all national bounds and exerted a world-wide influence. Some have gained greatness because of positions of influence; others by their ability to command conquering armies or otherwise sway the destinies of nations; some by noble deeds; others by their ability to inspire their fellowmen to nobler lives and ambitions. Some have been born to great positions; and some have seemingly been forced into greatness by the exigencies of time or conditions; others, inspired by love and zeal for God, have laid down their lives willing sacrifices upon the altar of devotion.

The world is quick to applaud the conquering hero and the prince of finance, but slow to recognize the true worth of the daily smouldering sacrifices of those who heed the Master's admonition, "Be thou faithful unto death." It is left to other generations to enshrine the real heroes; as in the case of our Lord and His disciples; and we believe the same will be true of Pastor Russell. Contemporaries too often misunderstand, misjudge, severely criticize and persecute. How true this has been of all of God's noblemen of the past! But God promises that all such as worship Him in the beauty of holiness in the midst of persecutions shall shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father—when their true greatness shall be revealed. How glad we are that God is taking cognizance of all sacrifices of love in His behalf!

Today we are paying our last loving tribute to the memory of one of God's noblest men. His life will speak for itself, when fully understood by succeeding generations.

I desire to add a brief personal testimony. For over twenty years, I was personally acquainted with our beloved Pastor, and for over fifteen years closely associated with him in business and otherwise; so I speak from personal knowledge and close observation. I first learned of him through his writings, and was drawn closer to the Lord by his logical exegesis of the Scriptures. It may seem strange, but 'tis true I scarcely noticed the writer. He was hidden behind the message. Later I became acquainted with him personally, and was closely drawn to him when I perceived the spirit that actuated him—the loving, loyal, consecrated heart, seeking to follow his God, seeking daily to do good unto his fellowmen, to the best of his ability, and seeking to assist them to a clearer perception of the true character of our God.

That he was misunderstood by many of his fellowmen mattered little to him, so long as he kept his heart right with God and had His approval. I never met a man who in my estimation endeavored more earnestly to live close to God, or fought harder to keep his body under. His influence upon others has been written in the hearts and lives of thousands all over the world whom he has assisted to a closer walk with God and a fuller consecration to the Lord and His Word. His SCRIPTURE STUDIES and his other expositions led me to see more of the Wisdom, the Justice, the Love and the Power of God than I had ever recognized before, and helped me to serve Him more intelligently than I had been able to do previously, although since childhood I had earnestly sought to do God's will to the best of my ability. As I saw with increasing clearness the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, I was led to consecrate to my Savior every ability I possessed and to seek further understanding. This consecration was made intelligently to my Lord, and I have ever endeavored to carry it out faithfully.

I would like now, as a further expression of my appreciation, to renew that consecration publicly. There may be others here also who have been assisted to a far better understanding of God's great Plan and His love for mankind through the ministries of our dear Pastor. (Thousands have so indicated.) Would you also like to make this an occasion for renewal of your consecration? My consecration was to no one but the Lord. I recognized our beloved Brother as a servant of God—and a highly honored one. But my consecration was to God. This great world-wide work is not the work of one person. It is far too great for

that. It is God's work and it changes not. God has used many servants in the past and He will doubtless use many in the future. Our consecration is not to a man, or to a man's work, but *to do the will of God*, as He shall reveal it unto us through His Word and providential leadings. God is still at the helm, and His work will continue in harmony with His Plan. Arrangements have been made for the carrying on of this work more earnestly than ever. It will be conducted along the same lines of full loyalty to the Word of God and love for the brethren, and it is for us to determine whether we shall be among its supporters and beneficiaries.

The speaker then asked, "How many would like here to renew their consecration to God, and to indicate it by rising?" Almost the entire audience, which packed the building, rose to their feet. A most impressive moment followed. The speaker's face was raised to Heaven; and silently the audience followed the words:

"Our Father, which art in Heaven, who canst look into the inner recesses of our hearts, Thou who dost not need the expression of our lips, to Thee, at this time, **[R6006 : page 367]** we desire to renew our Covenant made with Thee by Sacrifice.

"We consecrate afresh to Thee and to Thy service our every ability—our talents, and our opportunities—to be used as Thou in Thy wisdom mayst grant us understanding through Thy Holy Word and Thy daily leadings.

"May we realize more and more the great privilege of being considered by Thee an acceptable sacrifice, through the atoning merit of Thy well-beloved Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"And may the inspiration of the love of God, which constraineth us, and the Prize of the High Calling of God, in Christ Jesus, spur us to greater devotion to Thy cause and assist us to endure more faithfully than ever before, and to reflect in our every thought, word and deed Thy glorious character!"

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