

DISCOURSE SERVICE

Br. Ted Smith

How It Got Started: Back in December, 1969, a letter was written to 22 brethren that were thought to be sound in the Truth and who recognized that our Lord was using “That Wise and Faithful Servant” to give us our “meat in due season” by means of a “Harvest Message.” I quote below a few paragraphs from this letter:

“I am writing to you on a matter that seems very important to me. I have in mind the defense of ‘Present Truth.’ I have observed in recent months that there are certain brethren in our midst that have a keen appreciation of the Harvest Message, and who regard this as a special provision from God for our day. I have observed further that such brethren are alert to the fact that there are serious departures from Present Truth concepts, especially on prophecy. And finally, I have observed that certain brethren have given outstanding talks in defense of the Truth and that there exists special talent in making clear the logic and Scriptural soundness of the Harvest Message.

“It seems to me that it would be a great blessing if the brethren above mentioned could have access to the very best that each one has to offer and thus each one would increase his perception of Present Truth and sharpen his talents in presenting the Truth for the sake of the Lord’s people in general.

“... We are confronted today with determined leaders who are intent upon ‘taking over’ every Bible Student that will conform to their sad departures from Present Truth. Specious arguments are used, one being that ‘brotherly love is the final test’—therefore you should not cause a disturbance but submit to the new ideas without protest—so the argument goes, or is implied.

“I think we should be careful not to permit ourselves to become ‘isolated’ and possibly lose some of our zeal for the truth. I think all of us should keep in close touch so our courage will not be beaten down and so we can strengthen one another, and most important of all, so we can do everything possible for the brethren in general—whose spiritual welfare is our special responsibility.

“I would like to offer you a service that will cost you something, but if you are willing to participate, I think you will benefit in the way of increased perception of the Truth and increased sharpening of your natural talents. The cost I have in mind is not financial, but your willingness to provide typewritten discourses and/or ‘papers’ such as men of science would present to their colleagues—such ‘papers’ would of course be in the nature of reasoning and suggestions on how best to defend the Truth, with supporting Scripture and excerpts from our Pastor’s writings.

“The above would be YOUR contribution. MY contribution would be to make copies of your discourses and/or ‘papers’ and send them on to each of you. These ‘copies’ would become your property to keep. I would not attempt to edit discourses or ‘papers’ sent to me, but would send them on to you for your consideration and use as you saw fit. Any comments that you would wish to make (in typewritten form) on discourses

or 'papers' sent to you, I would copy and send them on to all of you.

"... I earnestly solicit your participation—share your understanding and talents AND SPIRIT with your brethren, who so earnestly desire to show their love for God and for Christ and for the Truth, by upholding the Truth WITH THE VERY BEST THAT IS AVAILABLE. 'THERE IS NOTHING TOO GOOD FOR GOD'S SERVICE' our Pastor said, and we heartily agree. Praying the Lord's blessing in all that we do, may I hear from you at your earliest convenience.

"Your fellow servant in Christ,
(Signed) "Theodore A. Smith."

Those who responded to this letter were favorable to the idea and certain discourses were sent to the writer. In a very short time (Feb. 19, 1970) one of the brethren wrote the following: "I feel sincerely that it is too bad to limit the dissemination to so few brethren. It seems to me there should be some way to have a much, much larger distribution to many, many more consecrated minds." This was a turning point in Discourse Service that had not been anticipated or even thought of. To make a long story short, the brethren were contacted and there was a favorable response to the idea. Unsolicited names were received by the writer and to these names discourses and 'papers' were sent through the mail. At present writing there are over 300 names on the mailing list, and the list is slowly growing as more brethren sent in new names, or as new brethren make request to have their names added to the mailing list.

A few brothers not originally contacted in the letter of December, 1969 have very kindly consented to our use of their discourses and manuscripts; and this has added to the blessing of Discourse Service as abundantly testified by the many letters of appreciation received from brethren on the mailing list. At present we are drawing heavily on discourses in old Convention Reports, on Newspaper Articles, and from the St. Paul Enterprise. We wish to acknowledge too the valuable service of a few sisters who spent many long hours taking off discourses in long hand from tapes.

Incidentally we are depending on the good sense of the brethren who read discourses taken from old Convention Reports. We use these discourses for their value at the time they were given before our Pastor's death; and in no sense should such use be regarded as approval of a brother after our Pastor's death. In fact in some cases, it is interesting to note how sound in the Truth some brethren were before our Pastor's death, and how sadly they departed from sound truth in later years. This should be carefully noted as lessons for us in our day.

Financing: no charge has been made for Discourse Service, and no charge is anticipated any time in the future. Our Expense Fund is adequate.

Those who want to remain on our mailing list should write us a short letter or card fairly

often so we will know the items are reaching their destination. If there is a change of address, notice should be sent to us immediately, so there will be no loss of consecrated time and money on the part of Discourse Service. And if one wishes his or her name removed from the mailing list, such should act according to the Golden Rule and not permit us to mail out items that are not wanted, but notify us promptly.