

INQUIRIES ANSWERED.

The following letter received recently was handed to Sister Russell for answering, and as the points might interest others, we publish.

DEAR SIR: –

Sent you a card which you will receive before you see this. Wished to ask several questions. I am interested in your paper, am a thinking Christian, but not settled in my views, seeking MORE LIGHT. Are we to expect revivals and the conversion of sinners now? Are we to labor for this result? Is the church coming up higher? Are we to come out of the church, take our name off church books, or remain in the church and labor to bring the rest upon the higher plain; or is each individual to be fully persuaded in his own mind and act according to his conscience? Shall I tell my sisters of like faith, better come out from among them nominally? In spirit, I am far from the majority – this I have called "coming out from among them. I want to be right. Will you take the trouble to answer "the thinking Christian's questions? Please be plain. Many are inquiring. What shall I tell them? I may read your letter (should you write one) to others.

My husband is a Methodist minister. Not preaching this year however.

Tell me plain truth, fear not.

DEAR SISTER: – Your letter is at hand, many such show us that there are very many hungry, thinking christians. Our love and sympathy reach out to all such though we have never met face to face, and we call them brother and sister because we see in them the family likeness – the spirit of Christ.

You ask if we may expect revivals of religion in the nominal church. No, we do not look for any evidence whatever of God's favor to this last phase of the nominal Gospel church which is spewed out of his mouth, because in her own estimation, she is rich and increased in goods (both spiritual and temporal) and has need of nothing. See how perfectly the picture of the church of to-day is drawn in Rev. 3:14,18. That mixed condition of worldliness and lukewarm christianity we believe to be the Babylon (confusion) of Rev. 18:2, out of which (vs. 4) the Lord calls the few of his own who still remain in that city doomed to destruction. There will probably be some accessions to their membership, but mainly from the Sunday Schools – the church is straining every effort to keep up appearances and urging immature childhood to join its ranks and swell its numbers. But this is not making christians as we understand the word. Christians are those who have consecrated themselves to the Lord – agree to follow Jesus' footsteps in the crucifying of the flesh (the human privileges and honors, etc.)

All others than the true wheat brought in, help to swell the numbers of the tares. Tares are not wicked people necessarily (though some are wicked) but people who are out of place in the church – imitating christians in some respects as tares imitate wheat. Those who get such into the church nominal, do an injury both to the person and to the church. The church is injured by getting a lifeless member to absorb its vitality, and who as a representative will serve to lower the standard of christianity.

The individual is injured by being told that he is a christian when he is not, and thus is worse off than if aware of his own position.

Surely, then, many people who engage in this improper work, some of whom, if not all, think they are doing God service, must be mistaken. And this work has been going on for years so that much of the wheat has been almost choked with tares. It is not God's work but

Satan's. The tares do an injury to the church, and Satan was instrumental (using God's children as his instruments) in getting them into the church to work the havoc they have. "He that sowed the tares is the devil," (Matt. 13,) no matter who was willing or unwittingly the instrument, (vs. 21).

With this, I will mail a June No. of ZION'S WATCH TOWER, the first article of which ("He on the housetop") will more thoroughly answer your question with reference to coming out of Babylon. It is of no use, to remain there trying to prop an organization which God has doomed to destruction: Better far, to trust his judgment with reference to expediency and promptly obey his command as soon as he makes it clear. The Lord loves prompt obedience, and then it is a great advantage, as it gives no opportunity to confer with flesh and blood.

Since we are in the "harvest" of the age, the work to be done is harvest work: The great work of the present is to help to ripen and gather into the barn-condition of safety, the true wheat. We would "do good to all men especially to the household of faith" – But if we find enough of this special work to keep our time fully occupied, we have no occasion whatever to worry about the rest of the world; for in God's "due time," they shall all be brought to a knowledge of the truth "and a full, fair opportunity to gain eternal life, and though they may first die (in Adam) the ransom price entitles them to a restoration from the Adamic death, and an opportunity to escape the second death by obedience to the law of God written in their hearts, no more stony but fleshly. (Jer. 31:33.) Then, instead of being prone to do evil as the sparks to fly upward, it will be the reverse – easy and natural to obey when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, and when the Lord rules instead of Satan.

Knowing God's glorious purposes for the world, Jesus let the Gentiles alone and devoted his time entirely to the harvesting of the

Jewish church. Though Gentiles as well as Jews were constantly going down in death, he did not try to save them then, knowing it was not yet God's due time.

I am glad to know that in spirit you are separate from the nominal church; I think all of God's true children are. They see the effects, but they do not understand the cause of the loss of God's favor to her. "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion;" but the Lord will "comfort all that mourn in Zion." When? Isaiah says her condition shall be a vexation to such, only till he makes **[R318 : page 5]** them to understand the doctrine – or the plan of God. And his plan is now being made clear to those who can rest their faith on a "thus saith the Lord," ignoring entirely the traditions of men. **[R318 : page 6]**

In coming out there are many sacrifices to be made, and you especially will find it so. A minister in our city said: Bro. R., I believe these things are true, but it would not be prudent to preach them. Husband replied, I would fear to be too prudent in this matter since the Lord "hides things from the wise and prudent." That minister had a large family well supported by a fashionable, worldly congregation who did not want to be disturbed in their sleep. He ventured to preach a little of what he believed and they told him it would not do; and to-day he is hiding his light under a bushel, or rather, it has gone out and he is walking on, hand in hand with the world, flourishing in worldly affairs; yet who can estimate that poverty in spiritual things?

You may be called upon to sacrifice your present means of living, but fear not, the Lord will provide another. No man hath forsaken all to follow Jesus, who did not receive a hundred-fold in return. It was refreshing to read that sentence in your letter – "Tell me plain truth, fear not." I could tell you much more than I have time to write at present. The Lord has so wonderfully led me from darkness to light, and from husks to corn, that my heart is filled with his praise.

The great sacrifice necessary, has kept the majority of ministers from the truth, but thank God, there is some ripe wheat among them, not choked by the tares. May God's grace be sufficient for you and your dear husband.

Your Sister in hope,
MRS. C. T. RUSSELL.
