

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

With the opening of another year we look backward over the past and forward into the future.

The year just buried will be one long remembered by quite a number of our readers, as the one in which they first gained a knowledge of God's word and the gracious plan therein revealed. To some it has been full of trial, as the great Refiner and Purifier has had them in the furnace to separate the dross from the gold, and to cause them to reflect his image (Mal. 3:3). Happy are they who, being tried by the fire, have not been found wanting, but have had their hearts more firmly established in the truth, and who have let go of the traditions of men and taken hold more firmly than ever of God's gracious favor in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Looking forward, we can but expect the same work to continue until every part of our faith-building is tried, and the wood, hay and stubble all consumed; for "the day that cometh [is now present] shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (Mal. 4:1; 1 Cor. 3:13-15.) If in the past your building has stood the test and not been destroyed, rejoice; but still with trembling, remembering that the trial is not all over yet. "Be not high-minded, but fear." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." If there is in your building anywhere that which will not stand the test of fire, it must go – replace it quickly by that which will abide.

If there is anything lacking in your consecration – if in anything you have a will not surrendered to and harmonized with God's will – take heed to it, for he will discover it. If, as one of his jewels, you are being polished to radiate his light, take heed that in you there shall be no self-will, which as a grit might cause a flaw

and mar your beauty and acceptableness with him when making up the number of his jewels.

It is not probable, that trials, besetments and difficulties in the "narrow way" will be less in the year begun than in the one ended. The furnace gets hotter rather. Yet, let us remember that the greater our difficulties the greater the supply of "grace to help in every time of need," for which it is our privilege to call at "the throne of the heavenly grace." Call to mind the words: "My grace is sufficient for thee," and, "Count it all joy when ye fall into temptations," knowing that if exercised thereby they will work out for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The past year has made us acquainted with a larger number of sacrificers (Priests – 1 Pet. 2:9 – the Levites did not offer sacrifices) than we had before known. Men and women who not only hazard but spend, of their consecrated time, money, talent and reputation, in spreading the "glad tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people." Through these consecrated agencies the truth is reaching other sheep of the flock, who were famishing and ready to perish by the way for want of its sustaining power. And these methods and exertions are being abundantly blessed, not alone in feeding and refreshing the hungry, but also in the growth and development of those so engaged. Every exertion in the Lord's service, and done unto the Lord, is sure to bring a compensating reward and blessing upon the heart of the laborer.

The year commenced offers fresh opportunities for sacrificing service. None should feel discouraged at opposition, and because few will believe our report – our Gospel. It is the few who have "an ear to hear" that we should expect to reach. If you at any time feel discouraged, call to mind the Master's experience. If the majority heard his words, you might expect them to hear yours; but if as a mass they rejected his words, they will reject yours also.

If they have called the Master Beelzebub, what more should we expect? It is sufficient that the disciple be as his Lord. (Matt. 10:25; John 13:16.) Then, with thanks for the past and present, and earnest prayer and confidence for the future, let us go forth with the whole armor of God girded on yet more securely, with the girdle of truth and trust; and grasping yet more firmly our shield of faith in his protecting care, and with the sword of the Spirit – his own Word – in hand, let us fight a good fight until we finish the work given us, that we may be of those accounted worthy to enter into the joys of their Lord.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

"New mercies, new blessings, new light on thy way;
New courage, new hope, and new strength for thy day;
New notes of thanksgiving, new chords of delight;
New songs in the morning, new songs in the night.
New wine in thy chalice, new altars to raise;
New fruit for thy Master, new garments of praise;
New gifts for His treasures, new smiles from His face;
New streams from the fountain of infinite grace.
New stars for thy crown, and new tokens of love;
New gleams of the glory that waits thee above;
New light of His countenance, radiant and dear!
All this be thy joy in the happy New Year!"

page 1

We give below extracts from some

INTERESTING LETTERS.

Prospect, Pa.

DEAR BRO. RUSSELL: – I called at your place about ten days since, but you were not in, and as I had not time to wait to see you, although I should like very much to have a conversation with

you, I scribbled a little note to you on the back of an envelope. I appreciated the November TOWER very highly, especially the revelation regarding Elijah. I can well conceive how this all appears foolishness to the world; but, thank God, my heart is open, and it is sweet to believe. Many antagonize our faith, but this very harsh, angry, blind, antagonism, both of those within and out of the Church, convinces me, or is to me another strong proof, of the correctness of our faith. How blind the world is! Even the educated will not believe. Why are we regarded with such contempt and our paper cast out as an evil thing? Surely it accepts the whole Scriptures, has the most thorough faith in Christ and his work, and only teaches holy living and more entire consecration to God. Thank God for the light he has granted to me, for the increased peace he is granting to me day by day! Not for the whole world would I be back again in the blindness and worse than Egyptian bondage of the church (nominal). I now feel free – as if a great burden had been lifted from me. Oh, that people would open their eyes to see! But God's will be done.

The TOWER is condemned without a thorough reading; this is plain to me from it being classed with the Day Star. Please let it be well known that there is no similarity between them. We build on the rock Christ Jesus, the Son of God, and affiliate with none who do not acknowledge him as such.

It is so lonesome here! There are none with whom we may hold Christian communion and fellowship; with whom we may converse on this glorious theme and plan. God grant us patience till the glorious day when all these crooked things shall be made straight! At present, here as elsewhere, the Church, or image, is engaged in the worship of that certainly good man, Martin Luther, to the exclusion of all else, at the same time giving warning to any other who may attempt to throw off the yoke as he did.

Affectionately yours,

_____.

Mountain Valley, Va.

MR. C. T. RUSSELL, Sir: – I have been carefully reading the copies of the WATCH TOWER which you sent me, and have gained much information therefrom, but I am much perplexed as to how I should proceed. In the first place I am not a Christian; and have never made any profession, although I have been desiring to become a Christian for some time. I have listened with great attention to all the preachers who preach in this country, mostly "Cambellites," "Baptists," "Missionaries" and "Methodists," but up to the present time they have failed to convince me of the truth and harmony of their teachings. Since I have seen the TOWER, I have become very much interested, and would like very much to have some preaching from you, or from one of your belief. Yours is entirely a new doctrine in this neighborhood and but very few have read any of your papers. Some, but they are few, say they would not read them if they had them. I would like very much to read your "Food for Thinking Christians," as also would many of my friends. And now I have one question to ask, If I should become convinced that this is the true doctrine, how am I to become a Christian? In other words "What must I do to be saved?" Please answer this by letter for my benefit as I need advice. Awaiting your answer I remain

Yours truly,

_____.

[We print this to show the effect of these doctrines upon the worldly. – Ed.]

Yankton, Dakota.

DEAR BRO. RUSSELL: – For several months I have been corresponding with one of the most zealous opposers of this "nameless sect" as he says they are called. He and his son, as general Bible agents, have traveled extensively over northern Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Southern Dakota. In canvassing for Bibles, they have found the people greatly interested in these new truths and have opposed them with all their might, having gathered and destroyed over 300 copies of "Food for thinking Christians," thinking they were full of error of the most dangerous kind.

Having explained its beautiful harmony in the main, with the Bible, as well as I was able, he promised to study it carefully and prayerfully; he writes me that having studied it faithfully for five months, he now has digested the most of it and believes it to be God's truth. He regrets exceedingly that he has destroyed the books. It is his intention to go to Chicago soon. He is much interested in the "Watch Tower" and says he will subscribe for it when he settles in Chicago.

Your Brother in Christ.

_____.

[R571 : page 1]

Brunswick, Maine.

DEAR BRO. RUSSELL: – I have read THE TOWER from January last with absorbing interest. God bless and speed the good work. I have long believed in a pure consecrated and holy ministry and church. But never have I so fully enjoyed my privilege as for the past few weeks and especially since Aug. 30, 1883. I spent forty years, five months, and ten days in the wilderness; but glory be to God I then entered Canaan. I am an evangelist and have been

preaching the truth as I understood it for many years. I intend to keep on doing so. God has been wonderfully opening to me the Scriptures of late. I find a few hungry ones everywhere I go.

Yours truly,

_____.

page 1

Basham's Gap, Ala.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – The ZION'S WATCH TOWER was received with a hearty welcome; it is being read and re-read with increasing interest. For the past thirteen years I have been a member of the M.E. Church, adhering strictly to its discipline till within the past year. I read the Bible closely to see if they kept in close connection with the Word, but I found they did not. Then I sought to understand the will of God from his Word. I began to earnestly seek after truth, I compared the teaching of the Bible and the creeds together and I found that they would not stand the test as they are built principally of hay, wood and stubble. I looked to Jesus for help seeing what must be the end of all these man made creeds, yet I saw no way of escape. At last the TOWER was handed me and thank God the mist of darkness has been removed **page 2** and rays of light are being thrown upon the work of God, which I now read with more interest and understanding. To-day I stand upon holy ground trusting in God's Word to guide me into all the ways of truth and soberness, believing in Jesus my Saviour, praying for my fellow travelers to be freed from Babylon's captivity, teaching all those I am competent to teach, distributing the TOWER to earnest seekers, wading through trials, bearing patiently the reproach of men, denying myself worldly gains, and trying to follow the footprints of Jesus. I have not language to

express my gratitude for the help already received from your standpoint, and stand ready to receive more of the food for which my soul is earnestly hungering.

Yours in Christ,

_____.

Westmoreland Co., Pa.

DEAR BRO. RUSSELL: – My wife and I have been very much interested in reading a second time the articles in June, July and Sept. Nos. of the ZION'S WATCH TOWER on "The Seven Churches" and "The Seven Last Plagues." We have also been reading again Feb. and July Nos. the articles "Before Abraham was I am" and "Hear, O Israel! Jehovah Our God is one God."

Oh how the truth has opened up to our understanding. We cannot help but believe, and accept it, for it is now so clear to our own vision. We don't accept just because our brethren in Christ say – this is so, or that is so – but when we search and examine using God's word as our standard of measure and when we find that the explanations given stand the test, we feel like rejoicing.

We feel glad that the light is shining so brightly, and that those to whom the truth is being revealed so liberally and wonderfully are freely giving, as freely they have received.

I wish we – of this way – were able to have some of the articles, in the Nos. above referred to, published in tract or pamphlet form. But it might be, like many of the other pearls (of truth) which we have scattered – they would be trampled under foot, often by our dearest friends whom we had expected and hoped might appreciate them.

I have felt lately that the Lord has been using me. This affords me great satisfaction. But the Devil has been trying every artifice to hinder me, and obscure my vision, and cause me to stumble. He knows where I am most easily beset. It does take watching. How weak I am. My temper and my pride I find hard to control. When I have fought well and gained a victory for the Lord's cause, even while I rejoice, the devil steals in and before I know it I am puffed up, and therefore I almost fear to rejoice. I try to be meek and humble and to empty myself of "self," of "pride"; but how often I catch myself, even when contending for the truth – even while I rejoice and am feeling thankful to God that he has opened my understanding, revealed to me the truth, and given me ability to use my talents. Even while thus rejoicing and giving God thanks, the adversary steals in and endeavors to puff me up. This has been a great stumbling block to me from the beginning of my Christian experience.

While a member of the M.E. Church I could never speak nor pray in public on account of this "fear" of what people would think of my remarks or prayer, or that I might make a blunder. My thoughts would get confused as soon as I would begin to anticipate that I might be called on. Thus you see how the devil takes advantage of my natural weakness, want of self confidence, and my fear of making a blunder – the root of which I think is "pride." Oh what a hindrance, what a thorn this weakness has been to me all my life, not only hindering me from publicly speaking for Jesus, but it has hindered me from speaking in public on all subjects.

How can I overcome it? The weakness is perhaps constitutional. Will the Lord remove it?

Your brother in Christ,

_____.

["Resist the devil and he will flee from you." – Editor.]