

THE TRIAL OF OUR FAITH NECESSARY.

Brother Von Zech translates the following letter from a German Lutheran minister who first received the good tidings through the German Tract and with whom he has been corresponding.

DEAR BROTHER: – Enclosed I return with hearty thanks the two sermons you sent me. I also received the German edition of Z.W. TOWER. It is precious, and we have been very much blessed by it. We are convinced of the truth, and I should like to resign my office in this worldly congregation and in the nominal church as soon as possible; but my wife is solicitous for the future. O if the Lord would show me a way, that my dear wife and children need not suffer want by this step, I would take it and henceforth labor in his service only. To go out as a book-seller separated from wife and children, would be too hard. The Lord has ways and means when his hour has come – we know of none. Please send me three copies of the German TOWER regularly.

Yours in Christ,

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[We sympathize with this dear Brother and there are on our lists probably three hundred ministers in the same quandary: we sympathize with them all. Yet we must in love and the truest sympathy tell them, that if they are consoling and excusing themselves as the above brother, by saying "The Lord has ways and means when his hour has come – we know of none;" then, they are deceiving themselves and letting slip their hold upon the great prize of our high calling.

True, the Lord could so arrange things that you could follow the truth without effort or self denial or loss of influence, salary, etc., but reflect that the united testimony of his Word is, that the present age is

a trial under disadvantageous circumstances, purposely permitted to be so, in order to give the consecrated ones an opportunity to show the strength of their love by the greatness of their sacrifices; and thus to select the "little flock" of "overcomers," who rejoicing to suffer for the truth, shall be esteemed "worthy" to share the throne and glory of the great overcomer Jesus, in whose footsteps of self denial they have rejoiced to be counted worthy to walk, and whose afflictions they have with joy sought to fill up. (Eph. 4:1; and Rev. 3:4; and Rom. 8:18).

It is because our Lord desires us to make our calling and election sure, to win the great prize he has set before us, that he does not smooth the way before us now (as he will before the world in general during the Millennial age when the "righteous shall flourish"). While he sympathizes with us fully he sees more clearly than prejudice sometimes admits of our seeing, the necessity of our trial, without which we could have no victory. And hence he tells us kindly, but firmly, that if we love houses, lands, wife or children or any other thing more than him, we are not worthy a place among his disciples to whom he promised the kingdom. He is then proving us, by the present discipline and watching to see how fully we meant it, when we professed to leave all else to be his followers. He tells us that in representing the truth we are representing him, and that to be ashamed of the truth is to be ashamed of him; and that whosoever is ashamed of him now, such will he be ashamed of and not acknowledge as members of his Bride before the Father of the angels of heaven. **[R832 : page 8]**

Really, when we think of it, we should be ashamed to stultify ourselves, by the thought even, that we are useless in the world, except to preach errors which we see to be contrary to God's Word and a libel on his great name and character. If, indeed, we are so useless and helpless that we can make a living in no other way, would it not be far more honoring to ourselves and all other honest souls that we should starve to death rather than dishonor God, deceive the

people and make merchandise of Babylon's errors? But why should we fear to starve? can we not earn enough for bread and water to keep us from starvation? Can we not rely fully upon God's promise to this effect? (Isa. 33:16; Psa. 37:25 and Matt. 6:30.) Is our faith so small?

Nay, doubtless each has confidence regarding the bread, water and plain clothing, but what they fear is the loss of some of the comforts, the luxuries which God has not guaranteed us. Whatever we have more than the actual necessities, we should wear as a loose garment to be cast aside for the spread of the truth or any other service of the Master in which its use may be needful. Nor should we do this grudgingly, but rather of a willing mind. We should remember the example of the Apostles who left all to follow the Master, counting home comforts, influence, etc., as but loss and dross, enduring stripes, imprisonments and hunger, if by any means they might be accounted worthy a place in the kingdom with the Master; as members of his body (Phil. 3:7-11). And above all, dear brethren, let us not forget him who set us an example that we should walk in his footsteps. Remember how he left home, and comfort, and riches, and glory, and heavenly honors in his desire to fulfill the Father's plan and bless us. Consider him lest ye be faint in your minds. Act out your convictions promptly, for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. Every cross seems harder before than after we lay hold to lift it. The Master himself will come the closer and help us. He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the trial provide a way of escape which he will reveal to us after we have conquered self and its fears and laid hold of the cross. – [EDITOR.]

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