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## PERSONAL LIBERTY, – ITS RESPONSIBILITY.

LIBERTY always increases responsibility. Each consecrated believer has the full liberty to use his consecrated talents in the Lord's service; but each should see to it that he does not misuse this liberty. Some are naturally inclined to undervalue their own abilities, and hence fail to be so useful servants of the truth as they might be. Others overestimate their natural talents, and waste valuable opportunities in trying to do things for which they have little or no talent; and neglect the exercise of other talents which they really do possess.

"Use not your liberty for an occasion of the flesh" – to cultivate pride and vainglory in yourself *or in others*. Let a man "think [of himself] soberly, according as God hath dealt out to every man the measure of faith." "All things are lawful for me [permitted by the loose rein of Christ's commands], but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." [R1628 : page 74] "Having then *gifts differing*, according to the grace given unto us" – whether our gift be a qualification for prophecy, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving of means, or presiding, let us use to our best ability the gift or gifts possessed; rather than fail by trying to use other gifts not granted to us; – "In honor preferring one another," – "Mind not high things," – "Be not wise in your own conceits." – Rom. 12:3-16; 1 Cor. 10:23. [R1629 : page 74]

These Scriptural injunctions apply to everything we may do, or endeavor to do, in the Lord's service. Those who have the money talent should not only use it "with simplicity" (without ostentation), but they should use it with wisdom. It should not go to assist in preaching either slight errors or gross ones, if they know it – neither by assisting in paying the expenses of meetings, nor in paying publishing expenses. And each one should *know*, directly or indirectly, what he is assisting to promulgate as truth. If you have read and failed to comprehend a publication, do not suppose your mind incapable of grasping anything

so deep and complex, and then proceed to circulate it among others; but conclude that if you have not the mental capacity to understand it, your safest plan will be not to run the risk of choking anyone else with it. "Whatever is not of faith is sin," applies to this as well as to other matters.

These criticisms apply to WATCH TOWER publications as well as to others. Prove by God's Word all that you receive from this office. (1) See if it squares with the doctrine of the *ransom*: if it does not, you need go no further with the proving. (2) If it is in accord with that foundation of the gospel, proceed to examine it in the light of all the Scriptures. (3) If it stands these tests receive it and hold it fast, as being *from God*; and (4) circulate it wherever you can. (5) But if ever you get from us either tract or paper which you do not find in harmony with the Scriptures, surely let us know wherein it disagrees, and do not circulate it.

This advice in no way conflicts with our Lord's words in Mark (9:39), when, in reply to the disciples' statement that they had forbidden some one to cast our devils because he followed not with them, he said, "Forbid him not." It is not for us to *forbid* anyone the exercise of his own talents according to his own wisdom. But if any one exercise his talents in a manner which we consider unwise or wholly or partially erroneous, it is our duty *not to render any assistance to the unwise course*. It is one thing to *forbid*, and to use sword and fagot to restrain, and quite another thing to leave them to themselves and to exercise your own talents according to your own judgment of the Lord's will. Some who are only babes in the present truth send in manuscript for publication in the TOWER and as tracts. With childlike simplicity they sometimes remark that their articles, etc., are chiefly extracts from the DAWN and TOWER. We have but one motive in publishing – namely, to disseminate the *truth*, as the Editor understands the Word of God to teach it. Let others publish what they please, and how they please; we *forbid them not*, and we *assist them not* if they follow not the lines of truth as we have been guided of the Lord to see them, and are seeking

to follow them. Nevertheless, to guard against the rejection of truth from other quarters, if the Lord shall choose to send it, we have appointed a *committee of three*, consisting of the Associate Editor and two others, to examine every article sent in for publication. Upon the recommendation of any two of that committee the Editor will publish any manuscript sent in; – even though he should think it necessary to review and contradict the conclusions reached. It is the *truth*, and the truth only, that we desire to publish and circulate, and that in the best form of statement known to us. Take it kindly, therefore, if your articles are oftenest rejected; and know nevertheless of our love and sympathy and appreciation of your desires and efforts.

Some of the dear friends while desiring to do good are in danger of doing the reverse, by expecting that MILLENNIAL DAWN colporteurs have all the gifts and talents necessary for the public expounding of the truth, and therefore encouraging some to do so who have not those talents. This is a serious mistake which has already drawn some discredit upon the truths we all love to honor. The leaven of pride and ambition is perhaps not yet fully purged out of any, but is merely kept in subjection by grace; and all require help to overcome it and to purge it out, rather than suggestions, etc., which might develop it. Let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works. If you find a humble one with ability, encourage him in its exercise; but **[R1629 : page 75]** if he be not humble minded encourage him not, even though he have the ability; for the higher you push him the greater will be his fall; because "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." – Prov. 16:18.

None love or appreciate the Colporteurs and the work they are doing for the Lord and his sheep in the spread of the truth more than do we. But none more than we realize the danger to which some of them are exposed by dear Brethren and Sisters who, meeting them, expect that they are Masters in Israel and able expounders of the Word. In endeavoring to meet this expectation some stumble over supposed types, and some over parables and over symbols of Revelation, and in

general, over "questions to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearer." Read 2 Tim. 2:14-21.

Of course the abilities or talents of God's servants differ; and it is proper that we should encourage such as have talents to use the best they possess in the most useful manner; but great care should be exercised to encourage only the *humble*, and then only in the exercise of talents or gifts *possessed*, and not in grasping for gifts with which they are not endowed. Our experience surely confirms the Lord's Word, that Not many great or learned or wise hath God chosen – now, nor at any time. Surely our Lord's leading and blessing seem to have accompanied the circulation of the printed truth in a remarkable degree, in the present harvest: Had he desired that the work be carried on in another way, he would have raised up more possessing the requisite abilities.

The Lord's blessing has wonderfully attended the colporteur work; so that through this agency over half a million volumes of the DAWN series are in the hands of the people, each preaching sixteen sermons on the Bible over and over again, and yielding greater and more lasting results than any public speaking. But the tendency we here mention (far more than the stringency of the times) has recently caused a great slackening of the colporteur work. Some of the ablest "harvesters" are doing less than one-tenth what they formerly did. And this in turn puts them back in their accounts with the TOWER office, so that at present the indebtedness of Colporteurs amounts to about seven thousand dollars, and causes serious inconvenience at a time when it is difficult to borrow money at a high rate of interest. This latter, however, is a secondary matter. We are glad to be able to give credit to all who need it, and whose time and energy are being expended in the work in the manner for which they have shown that they have the necessary gift or talents.

If we thought this to be a leading of Divine Providence, pointing us to a change of methods, we should at once fall into line with it and

cooperate. But we do not so view it. We believe, on the contrary, that it is but another of Satan's delusions and snares by which he would hinder the work and injure the harvest laborers. If we knew of any better publications for presenting the truth than those of the *Tower Tract Society*, we would surely discontinue present publications and put our energy upon those. But so long as you and we know of no other publications in any degree entering the field of present truth and standing fast upon the one foundation – the ransom – we cannot doubt that this agency, so far used, should continue to be used, with all of our united energies, until the Lord shall say "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," or until we see some *better* way and are *sure* it is the Lord's way. On the contrary, the Lord is continually sending out new laborers, and opening the way for translations of M. DAWN into other languages.

Since Christmas a Baptist Brother has received the truth, and is working at his trade and laying by the money needful to defray his expenses to New Zealand, where he hopes to spread the truth. And we have a proposition from two others to go to Australia.

All who are in agreement with the above sentiments should cast their influence by word and deed with their judgment. But let none misunderstand the loving motive which prompts you. Speak the truth *in love* (Eph. 4:15); "others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." – Jude 21-23.

To those possessed of fewer or humbler talents than some others, and who are diligently and faithfully using such as they do possess, we would suggest that the time is not far distant when all the faithful will be crowned with the perfect abilities which will be common to all who shall become partakers of the divine nature. Meantime, each should use what talents he *has* to the best of his ability; assured that the faithful over one or two talents will receive the same blessed plaudit as the faithful with five talents – "Well done, thou good and faithful servant:...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

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