

[R1706 : page 297]

INTRODUCING T.T. SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES.

"Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?" – 2 Cor. 3:1.

WE introduce again the subject of certificates mentioned in our last issue by the following letter just received from our very dear and very cautious Brother Owen.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – Brother McPhail has come and gone, and all bear testimony to the benefits derived from his meetings here. He held four meetings at our house and two in West Indianapolis, all but one of which I attended. I feel that I was benefitted by each meeting. At the close of the meeting I expressed my intention of sending in a small contribution to the Tract Fund as a substantial mode of expressing my approval of the new venture, and, without urging the matter, asked all who felt so disposed and who had the ability to do so, to hand to me at the close of the meeting such sums as they felt like contributing towards meeting the extra expense incurred by the Tract Society, in sending out ministers. Our voluntary offering amounted to \$12.50, which I enclose.

After the meeting was over, Sister Owen took me to task about taking up a *collection*, saying [R1706 : page 298] among other things that people had already contributed to the Tract Fund what they felt able to do and that to set the example and thus establish a precedent might prove burdensome to some of the little groups, or at least make them feel that they ought to follow our example, when perhaps they would not be able to do so, and that under such circumstances the visits of brethren might prove to be just the reverse of a blessing. I was quite careful, however, to make all feel that they were entirely free to act just as their feelings and circumstances might dictate.

I wish to say that Brother McPhail did not even hint at a collection being taken, and when some offered to help defray his expenses he refused the money, saying to such, "If you have any thing to give, send it to the Tract Fund."

I wish to make a friendly criticism of the article in last TOWER: "Another Branch of the work." It seems to me that to have the brethren introduce themselves by a certificate of character from the Tract Society is extra cautious, and that your enemies will seize upon this to give coloring to their charges of "Popery," etc.

After the experience you have had with some of those you trusted most, it is but natural that you be more cautious where you place your confidence. And this is right.

I fully appreciate the difficulties of your position; my heart goes out to you in love; and I certainly do not feel in the least critical. You, my dear brother, wield a power with the true Church which is remarkable – the result I think of your disinterested service and devotion to its interest, and the absence of any dictatorial spirit on your part. You are and have been *indeed* the servant of all, and this service makes you *master* in a way that no other power under the heavens could do. So have a care, brother, lest Satan tempt you to over-cautiousness. Better too much liberty than not enough.

Sister O. joins me in love to all. As ever, yours in our dear Redeemer, C. A. OWEN.

Our dear Brother's solicitude for the interests of Zion, and the kindly way in which he offers his suggestions, are greatly appreciated. But we do not share his fears, and will show that there is no foundation for them. There is surely no *real* difference between a personal introduction of one brother to another and an introduction of distant brethren by letter. Nor does it alter matters whether the introduction or letter is from one person to another person, or from the Tract Society to many persons, readers of the WATCH TOWER publications. Nor

could it make a whit of difference to the travelling brother whether he *said*, "I call upon you as a representative of Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society," and showed no certificate, or whether he produced a signed letter from the Society, – except that the latter would assure him the warm confidence of the friends, whereas without it there might be a doubt as to whether he was a *self-appointed* representative of the Tract Society, or whether he was acknowledged as a representative by the Society, through its officers.

Besides, it is expected that the accredited representatives will take many new subscriptions for ZION'S WATCH TOWER from parties newly or more deeply interested through their labors, and a certificate would be an evidence that the stranger who receives the money is truly a representative of Z.W.T.T.S. Some years ago a man took hundreds of TOWER subscriptions and sent the names to us for *sample copies merely*, and fraudulently retained the money for his own use. We made good all such losses so far as we learned of them, and finally by threats of arrest got the man stopped. Every one knows that there are such characters, and it is not right to expect people to receive strangers into their confidence without some introduction from those they do know.

In the text at the head of this article the Apostle remarks that *he* did not need letters of introduction; but this was because he was well known by them, their faith being God's workmanship through him; but his words show that he considered himself an *exception* to the rule, and that he approved as necessary the giving and receiving of letters of commendation, as between teachers and churches visited.

The only dangers we can imagine would be (1) in case the church receiving a brother thus commended should accept his utterances without proper scrutiny and scripture proving; or (2) in case the having a certificate should be considered *necessary* as an authorization or permission to preach.

We wish to warn all against any such views of our *letters of commendation*, by whomsoever presented. They do not signify that the owner is an *infallible* teacher, but that he is one who has written to us of his full sympathy with the eight simple qualifications named in the article in our last issue, headed "Another Branch of the Work," and who stated that he possesses those qualifications by the grace of God; and that the [R1706 : page 299] *Tower Tract Society* believed him to be a *true-hearted* brother in Christ, clear in his views of the *fundamentals* of the Gospel and fully consecrated to the will and service of the Lord.

Nor do these letters of commendation signify that others have not an *equal* authority from the Lord to preach the Word. The commission to preach, yea, the *duty* of preaching publicly or privately, orally or by the printed page is upon all who *hear*, – upon all who receive the truth in the love of *it*. But you must prove all teachers and teachings before fully receiving them into your hearts. "By their fruits ye shall know them," and by proving their doctrines – measuring both with the letter and the spirit of God's Word.

But such a proving may take considerable time, and if the brother be with you but a day or two and be a stranger, you may hesitate to *ask him* the plain, simple questions propounded in our last issue, – whether he is a believer in the *ransom* (in the sense of a *corresponding price*, its only true significance); and whether he is fully consecrated to the Lord in will and service. On the other hand, if he has a certificate you will at once know that he has confessed all this to the Tract Society's officers as your representatives. We do not say that you should reject or refuse any brother coming to you without our letter of introduction and commendation, but that you may [R1707 : page 299] receive with special readiness and quicker confidence those who do come so introduced; knowing what *they* have *professed* and what *we believe* concerning their character, consecration, etc.

So far from this being a popish method, it is the very reverse; for Papacy affects to give its ministers the right and power to "create Christ" in the mass, and anathematizes all who attempt to teach without its authorization. On the contrary, this introduction by letter, as a safe-guard against "false brethren" and "wolves in sheep's clothing," was the custom of the primitive Church, practiced by the Apostles (See Acts 18:27; Phil. 2:19-25-29; Col. 4:10,11; Philemon 10-17) and mentioned approvingly in the text at the head of this article. Satan would doubtless be glad to drive us from every precautionary measure by a fear of what enemies would say; but we remember that the Lord was called Beelzebub, by those whom Satan deluded and used, and that he forewarned us that they would say all manner of evil falsely against all of his *faithful* servants. People who have "the spirit of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7) will not be deceived by these enemies, who, under the lead of the great enemy, Satan, would fain have us cast away all safe-guards which the word of God and common sense approve, in order that the wolves in sheep's clothing might ravage the flock and fatten themselves.

We here give a copy of these certificates. Notice how simple the statements: the *ordination* is of God in the Scriptures, and is common to all of his people, and the certificate merely declares that the TRACT SOCIETY *recognizes* the owner in the capacity named: –

Allegheny, Pa., U.S.A., _____ 189_____.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to Certify that *during the year above written* _____ of _____, is regularly ordained a minister of the "Church of the Living God" (1 Tim. 3:15; Phil. 4:3); that _____ is serving as a Missionary and Evangelist under the auspices of this Society; that _____ has full authority to teach and preach publicly and privately, orally and by the printed page; and that _____ is authorized to administer to others of the household of faith, upon suitable occasions and after proper confession of faith,

the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper – according to all and singular the commands and teachings of this Church as laid down in the Holy Scriptures.

Witness the signatures of the officers of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Allegheny City, Pa., U.S.A., and the corporate seal thereof.

_____ *President.*

_____ *Secretary.*

With the exception of four brethren, it is proposed that this work shall have its start from the first of next year. Meantime, we hope to hear from all brethren who have time that they can *donate to the Lord* in some such service, and who would take pleasure in so doing. We will take pleasure in co-operating with these, to the extent of our judgment of the Lord's will in the matter. But for the sake of *uniformity*, and for the *assurance* of the brethren to whom such shall go, we must require of all such a clear, unequivocal declaration that they believe themselves, by the grace of God, possessed of the *eight qualifications* for this ministry, specified in the Sept. 1 TOWER; because we believe that the child of God who cannot in the fear of God say for himself what is [R1707 : page 300] there simply set forth would be a totally unfit person to commend to the Church as to any extent an instructor in divine things, or as likely to do good rather than harm in his use of the sword of the spirit, the Word of God.

Probably we shall have more offers for this service than we can wisely accept; but we will have another method of service to suggest to some.
