

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.

In our last issue we stated that a different wording for the proposed Introductory Letter for traveling teaching brethren had been decided on; and this we give below. It may be well, however, to guard against any misunderstanding by explaining: –

I. These letters are not *authorizations* to preach. That cannot be given by man. All true disciples, trusting in the precious blood, and fully consecrated to the Lord's service, are *authorized* by God's Word to preach the gospel in any and every way they can do so; and according to their talents and opportunities such should be glad to do all the preaching they can do, publicly or privately, by word or pen or printed page. (See Matt. 28:19.) The Apostle Paul, while assuring us that his authorization or ordination as a minister was not of man nor by man, but of and from God only (Gal. 1:1), nevertheless went forth to his ministry with Barnabas under the auspices of the Church at Antioch – as the Lord's representative and as the representative of the Church at Antioch. (Acts 13:3; 14:26,27.) He evidently took just such a letter; for it was the usual custom to give and carry such letters. (Phil. 2:28-30; Rom. 16:1-15,17; 1 Cor. 16:3; Acts 18:27.) This is intimated in his epistle to the Corinthians – "Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you," etc.? (2 Cor. 3:1.) He did not need such a letter to the Church at Corinth, because, as he there explains, he himself had founded and established that Church and few could know him better than they, or them better than he. But when first he visited the Church at Jerusalem, he did need letters, or more, a personal introduction. (See Acts 9:26,27.) It is this Apostolic custom and safeguarding of the flock that we seek to copy now, for the *benefit* of all concerned. Individual letters would serve where the individuals are known, or Church letters would serve where the Churches are known; but in this case the Tract Society is known to you *all*, and we are confident that its introduction will be appreciated by the scattered ones everywhere.

II. ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY is not a "religious society" in the ordinary meaning of this term; for it has no creed or Confession of Faith. It is purely a *business* association, whose mission is to serve in a business manner the wishes of its beneficiaries, who are represented in its officers. How faithfully it has served these purposes thus far, its enemies no less than its friends bear witness.

The design of the organization of the Tract Society is to keep the affairs and moneys, represented by it, quite separate from the *individual* affairs of its managers. This present convenience, however, is still less than may be enjoyed in the future; for it is hoped that the death of any or all of those now managing the Fund would not destroy the Society nor totally hinder or involve its work, as the representative and servant of the household of faith, in economically providing tracts, etc., etc., for their use, [R1720 : page 331] benefit and assistance in missionary work, since in its Charter provision is made for such contingency.

III. The issuance of these Letters of Introduction means no more than if you or any other individual gave such a letter – except that it represents the judgment of experienced brethren, well informed respecting the character, ability, etc., of those introduced. – See Acts 16:2.

Thus, in this day of "deceivers" (2 Tim. 3:1-13; Rom. 16:18; Matt. 24:24; Eph. 4:11-14), you may the more readily receive those of whom we bear testimony, knowing that we will use conscientious care.

IV. It will be noticed that the eight qualifications named in this Letter of Introduction are not doctrinal, except as to the *ransom* – the foundation: and we hold that without it none are Christians at all. The other qualifications are those respecting *character*, and we believe them to be reasonable; and any one who could not confess them to be true of himself by the grace of God, we could not feel free to introduce as a proper person to be a teacher or a qualified servant, in the Church of the living God.

It is not to be understood that those making these professions of qualification claim to be *perfected* in all those Christian graces and qualifications, but that they believe that they have them to *such a degree* as they concede a representative of Christ should possess them, in order to be a servant of the Church in holy things. All possessed of the right spirit, however, will desire and strive to continually grow in grace and knowledge and love and in every good work, and expect to be perfected only when they awake in the resurrection, in the likeness of their Lord. – 1 Cor. 15:42,43.

This Introductory Letter expires December 31, 1895, and should be returned at that date, with application for renewal, if a new one is desired. The holder agrees to return this letter to the Society upon demand of the Society through its Board of Directors, at any time.

Copy of the –

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION.

FROM ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY, ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A. To the Church of the living God, whose names are written in heaven (1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:23), Greeting!

We hereby commend to your Christian fellowship, and to your acceptance as a helper and counselor, our beloved brother and co-laborer, _____.

He is a brother beloved in the Lord, well reported of by brethren who know him, and one whom we recognize as a child of God and follower of Christ (with all that this implies respecting good moral character); and we believe him to possess the following qualifications for SPECIAL SERVICE to the household of faith:

I. Unexceptional moral character, polished by the truth.

II. Meekness – that he may not become puffed up, and thus be injured himself, while seeking to help you.

III. A *clear* conception of the Lord's great plan, and large participation in its spirit.

IV. *Ability* to impart the truth to others in its own power and simplicity (not necessarily an orator).

V. *Known* fidelity to the doctrine of the ransom in its only true sense – a corresponding price or substitute for the forfeited life of Adam and his race, which inherits death through him.

VI. A humble mind, seeking to preach not himself, but Christ – not to air his own knowledge, but to present God's Word in its purity and simplicity.

VII. A student of the Word, of cultivated thought, well founded and settled – not a wondering *novice*; not a teacher of speculations and fancies, nor of Anglo-Israelism, Socialism, Politics, Astronomical theories, or other questions not of spiritual profit, but to the subverting of the hearers (2 Tim. 2:15-17; 1 Tim. 4:7; 6:20,21); but –

VIII. He comes to you seeking to establish the faith and character of the Church, presenting the One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism – the one gospel, authorized by and based upon the one sacrifice, given once for all.

He has affirmed to us, in writing, that, by the grace of God, he already possesses these qualifications, and that he is striving daily to *perfect them* in his actions, words and thoughts; and, in showing this Letter to others, he thereby makes the same confession to them.

He comes to you under the GENERAL ORDINATION AND COMMISSION of our Lord's Word, applicable to all *fully consecrated believers* in the precious blood (Matt. 28:19,20; Isa. 61:1-3); but is particularly commended by us to you, because of the above eight special qualifications, – for your upbuilding in knowledge and practice of the truth, to help you over difficulties, and to help you to *stand*, in this evil

day, against all the wiles of Satan and his multiplied, deceptive errors. We hope also that he will be able to water and bring forward to perfection some of the good [R1721 : page 331] seeds of truth which you have been patiently sowing amongst your neighbors for years, by word of mouth, and by the printed page; – answering their remaining questions, and convincing and confirming such in the knowledge of [R1721 : page 332] the truth; and to aid all in the great life-work of "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

He has full authority from the Lord (as above cited) to administer symbolic baptism, according to all and singular the commands and teachings of the Holy Scriptures; and to take a leading part in gatherings of the "household of faith," either for commemorating our Lord's death, or for worship, or for Bible study; but he has no more *authority*, under the above commission, than has any other consecrated believer, except such authority as *special qualifications for this service* would give. His coming to you with this our letter of introduction and commendation will, we doubt not, secure to him the leadership of any meetings held during his stay, – even though the local leader should hold a similar letter of commendation. Receive him in the spirit of love and Christian fellowship, and aid him by your prayers and cooperation (Col. 1:7; 4:7-9; Phil. 4:3); nevertheless, PROVE (1 John 4:1-3) critically, by the Word of the Lord, his every presentation. Hold fast that proven to be good. – 1 Thes. 5:21.

In the love and service of the King of kings and of Christ Jesus, the Lord, Redeemer and Head of the Church, we remain

Your loving servants,

ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY.
{Corporate} _____ *President.* {Seal.} _____ *Secretary.*
