

TRACT SOCIETY'S INTRODUCTORY LETTERS.

IT has been decided best to recall all of the Introductory Letters issued under the auspices of ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY, and to issue no more of them.

ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY is only a business association (has no creed or confession). It merely represents a fund entrusted to its officers for use to the best of their judgment in the spread of the Truth; – especially of those truths set forth in MILLENNIAL DAWN and ZION'S WATCH TOWER, by means of which many of the donors have been brought, by God's mercy, out of darkness into his marvelous light. The funds donated are used under the direction of the Editor (who is President of the Tract Society), just as they were used before the Society was organized. It was chartered at the request of some of the friends and contributors with a view to the continuance of the "harvest" work should the Editor die before the end of the "harvest."

This Society, therefore, would have the same right as any other business firm to give a Letter of Introduction to any one it might think worthy. But we find that the very word "Society" is liable to be misunderstood by some to mean Church; and that some are in danger of regarding this Society's Letters of Introduction as if they were Commissions, Authorizations or Ordination papers. We discontinue these Letters because we wish to "avoid the very *appearance* of evil," as the Word teaches.

Neither one man, nor many men unitedly, can either give or take away from anyone authority to preach in the name of the Lord. God only can give such authority; and he alone could cancel it. He has given this authority to all his people, saying: "He that hath my word let him speak my word." We sought specially to guard against such an idea as that the Letters of Introduction were letters of *authority*, and the Letters themselves state this most explicitly; but since they are misunderstood

by some, they might later on come to be misunderstood by many. Hence they are recalled before they can do harm. Indeed, they may do good by leading to this emphatic calling of attention to God's as the only competent authorization; and the pointing out afresh that ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY is not a religious but a business association. It makes no creeds; it merely keeps accounts of the moneys received and expended; just as a banking firm receives deposits and returns checks or vouchers showing what was [R1848 : page 181] done with the money. It makes no demands, nor assessments, nor does it beg or importune for money. It merely gives notice that it is ready to receive and use, as wisely as possible, whatever money may be sent by the interested ones, who have been helped out of Satan's darkness into the sunlight of God's loving plan by its aid.

But what shall we do to shield the flock from some who have left the truth of which the *ransom* is the foundation? Well, the "sheep" are, *very properly*, learning to be on guard against "wolves in sheep's clothing," and must be all the more on guard and receive not every spirit. They must all the more carefully watch against the *wiles* of the devil. Let them remember that the true spirit is –

(1) "First pure, then peaceable." And let them beware of any and all coarseness, vulgarity or other uncleanness or impurity, in word, act or personal appearance.

(2) Let them remember that the spirit of Christ is never without *meekness* and *gentleness*. A contentious, quarrelsome, rude, selfish spirit is a sure indication that the one possessing it is not fit to be a teacher even or "babes in Christ." But specially beware of some who are hypocritically smooth and meek and who engender doubts, suspicions, fears, and destroy faith and confidence with feigned love and tears. The openly contentious are far less dangerous than these wolves in sheep's clothing.

(3) Reject instantly and have no fellowship or communion with any who either openly deny the merit of Christ's work as our ransom-price,

or who do so by the sophistry of their arguments, while professing to hold to the ransom, upon which they put a false meaning, ignoring the true meaning of the word ransom, Gr. *antilutron*, – a corresponding price. Such errors although the worst and most destructive are easiest of all to "prove" – a moment or two will suffice; then act on the true principle and have *no fellowship with them*, and investigate no further.

(4) The outward proofs of character may be satisfactory, and the first applied tests of doctrine – faith in Christ as a savior from sin and its penalty, by a ransom, – may be quickly made; but then comes a further criticism. For we are not to "swallow" even the less important teachings of any except as we find them to be in harmony with God's Word. Unless you are absolutely sure of them, turn and look at the connections of any Scriptures quoted to prove any *new* point. Accept only such views of Scripture passages as agree well with the context. Many are susceptible to error through neglect of this rule.

(5) While "preaching" is one of the very best methods for giving and receiving instruction, it is only proper for such as have some natural ability in that direction. Others should be encouraged to serve in other ways, each "according to his several ability." (Matt. 25:15.) Some who are not platform speakers are excellent otherwise, "apt to teach," and should be appreciated and used in Bible Class talks. And even an orator should not be encouraged unless he have an *aptness* for teaching – an ability to make matters clear, and not as some to use fine language and yet only confuse the hearers. With small groups "Parlor talks" and "Bible Class" studies are in our judgment preferable to set sermons.

(6) Even if there be a recognized "preacher" in the company, there should be, if possible weekly, a meeting at which *all* could be heard, on the lines of propositions **1, 2, 3** and **4** above; – a Bible-Study class.

(7) There should be, if possible, one meeting per week for prayer, praise and testimony – a meeting not for doctrinal discussion but for spiritual exercise and enjoyment, and for self inspection and mutual helpfulness in holy things.

(8) The congregations established by the apostles appear to us to have had *both* the Congregational and the Episcopal features.

The Congregational feature is seen in that each congregation had the control of its own affairs under the Lord, its head, to whom alone it was responsible; and each regulated its own ministry.

The Episcopal feature is seen in the fact that it was understood and expected that the Lord, the great Shepherd of his sheep, would provide pastors, teachers, etc., for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. (Eph. 4:11-13.) The congregations looked for the Lord's providential leading in this matter, yet were not unmindful that there were many false teachers raised up by the adversary, and they sought to *prove* their teachers.

When, and so long as, teachers were recognized as having been God-provided, and so long as they *approved* themselves by conduct and the Word of God, to the congregation, they had more honor than others; and their opinions were given proportionately the more weight. (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17; Rom. 12:10; 13:7.) But still [R1848 : page 182] the power rested with the congregation to reject any teacher according to their judgment of the Word and will of God.

(9) Love is the only *bond* of perfectness – the perfect bond. Neither bind yourselves nor others with any other bond. Love supreme to God will mean that loyalty to his Word will outrank all other considerations; love for the brethren will mean a generous readiness to see as many as possible of each other's virtues and talents and to seek for each other's highest spiritual welfare – whatever the channel.

(10) Avoid all "organization"; meet as a family of God; recognize as "brethren" all who profess forgiveness of sins through faith in the precious blood and who show by their daily life that they are "striving against sin"; and choose your honored *servants* from your midst. In choosing seek not your own will or glory, neither that of other brethren,

but the will and glory of God only, remembering the foregoing considerations as you find them Scriptural.

Should the Editor have occasion to send any special messenger to you he will probably give him *his personal* letter of commendation. (The giving of such letters is usual among friends whether Christians or of the world. But every child of God should feel a special responsibility as to whom he recognizes as friends or introduces to God's people as teachers.) If a Brother come to you bearing such a letter signed by the Editor, you may know that he is one with whom the Editor is well acquainted, and who he believes has some special talents for serving to you the bread of life.
