

CO-LABORING WITH OUR GOD

TOO often do God's people forget that the Lord Himself is at the head of His work. Too often the thought is, We will do a work and get God to co-labor with us in our work. Let us get the right focus on the matter, and perceive that God has purposed and is carrying out a great work; and that it will succeed, entirely regardless of us and our effort; and that it is a great privilege granted to the people of God to co-labor with their Maker in the carrying out of His plans, His designs, His arrangements, in His way. Viewing matters from this standpoint, our prayer and our watching should be with a view to knowing and doing the will of the Lord, content whatever lot we see, since 'tis our God who leads us.

This is the program which the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY has sought to follow. Its officers are seeking to do the will of the Father as guided by the teachings of the Head of the Church, Christ Jesus and His appointed representatives, the twelve Apostles, whose words we have for our instruction today in better form than ever before. Following this program, our Society has not sought to lay up earthly riches, but has been, rather, a spending institution. Whatever God's providence sent in to us without solicitation we have sought to spend as wisely as possible in harmony with the Word and Spirit of the Lord. Long ago we announced that when the funds would cease, the activities of the Society would cease proportionately; and that as the funds increased, the Society's activities would be enlarged.

This program has been greatly blessed of the Lord and, we believe, is in full accord with His will. We have no thought of changing it in any degree. Last year was the most wonderful one

in our experience. The Gospel Message by printed page and orally and by the DRAMA witnessed the Gospel of the Kingdom nigh at hand to millions of people all over the earth. We thank God for the blessed privileges enjoyed and the activities permitted in His service on behalf of thousands of His consecrated people in every land, co-laboring with the Society and [R5682 : page 140] laboring either directly or indirectly under its auspices.

When making our last Annual Report, we expressed the thought that many of the Lord's people have already invested what money they possessed, and that we would thus expect donations to be smaller than heretofore and that we would be obliged to discontinue some of the DRAMAS. Later we announced bright prospects of a full resumption. We did not tell the basis of this expectation, but will now explain:

Some Brethren informed us that they believed they were possessed of a rich gold-bearing property, that all of its proceeds were consecrated to the Lord's service, that ere long we might expect money from them in good supply, but that their names were to be kept secret. Their expectations, which were highly appreciated, were not realized. The expectation had a beneficial effect, however, in that it encouraged us to keep the work up to a high notch of speed and efficiency in every direction until the present time. Now we have gone our limit. We must conclude that it is the Lord's will that our activities be greatly curtailed, in order to bring down the expenses to a parity with the income.

SEVENTY SENT FORTH

In line with this decision, seventy of the dear helpers at the Society's Headquarters have been obliged to go forth to seek other avenues of usefulness in the work. Some will become Colporteurs; others will accept situations as teachers in schools and colleges; some will enter business life. All will, we believe, however, still continue to put God first and to consider the spread of the Gospel

of the Kingdom their main business of life, giving evenings, Sundays, etc., to the service, as may be possible.

The necessary retrenchments include the putting of the DRAMAS on a self-supporting basis – or else discontinuing them. Our Society can continue to supply films and slides for these DRAMAS, and the Office direction, but must look to the Superintendents and operators of each DRAMA to meet their own expenses. This is being done by offering the DRAMA to Theatre Managers as part of their regular program, to be charged for, but not at an extra charge. The new plan is being put into operation and is proving successful generally. Indeed, some people declare that they would much prefer to pay an admission fee than to attend the DRAMA free, because they feared that at a free entertainment they would be brought in contact with the rude and uncleanly. It is a remarkable fact, however, that our free entertainments have been generally attended by a splendid class of people from the middle walks of life. Furthermore, to adapt the DRAMA to the use of the Theatre Managers we have arranged that the FOUR PARTS can be given in full as now, two hours each; or, if the Theatre Managers prefer, we will supply the four entertainments of about one hour each by omitting some of the slides and lectures, leaving the audience to get the remainder of the DRAMA by the reading of the Scenario. It may be that in this way the Lord will use the DRAMA in reaching a still different class from that already reached by its free exhibition.

The free volunteer matter, which last year ran up to the enormous amount of forty-seven millions of copies, must also be cut down. Some of our readers have orders placed; and this will be the explanation if your orders are not filled entirely. In a word, the retrenchment will extend all along the line, including a reduction in the expense allowances of the Bethel Family and curtailment of expense for food supplies. Our readers will be glad to know that the entire Family is rejoicing in the privilege of further self-denials

for the Cause we love to serve, and that the seventy who have gone forth, some of them with tears, also manifest fullest resignation to the Divine will, rejoicing in the various steps of Divine providence and continuing steadfast in prayer, faith and love toward the Lord and the Brethren. All are seeking to receive the experiences of life as the polishing preparatory for the Kingdom. So receiving them, the blessing of the Lord is more and more manifest amongst us.

We have made this statement with greater detail than might seem necessary, lest there should be wrong impressions and misunderstandings of any kind.

OUR GENERAL LETTER

To Seventy Brothers and Sisters of the Bethel Family:

Greetings!

Sorrow mingles with our joy to do the Father's will and to follow the guidance of His providence, because it signifies a temporary parting from so considerable a number of those whom we dearly love and whose association with the work we highly prize. At the opening of the year we thought that we saw a bright ray of financial hope, notwithstanding the fact that the dear friends throughout the world who had been contributing to the Tract Fund to support the work had well drained themselves of means and could not be expected to continue their donations as formerly. Month by month we have waited and maintained the work, expecting some realization of our hopes; but after five months the drain is so heavy that prompt action is necessary. We must not involve ourselves in debt nor jeopardize the work in general; hence the decision for the reduction of the expenses along every line, including the Home expenses, Office expenses, etc.

Financially we know that some of you will be benefited by the change. We can surmise also that some will experience benefit to their health by a change of employment. We assume that some of

you thus leaving the Bethel and the Tabernacle will be entering the Colporteur work. The weather is delightful now, and in places where money is not too scarce good success is obtainable.

In any event, dear Brethren and Sisters, we commend you to the Lord and to His watch-care, blessing and guidance, assured that all things are working together for good to those that love Him. He may have some new experiences for us – trials and blessings. He may have some new opportunities for us and may guide us in the reaching of others in this gleaning time. We assure you that we are loth to part with you and that, should the financial stringency be relieved, it will be our pleasure to again expand the work, according to the leading of the Lord's providence.

So far as possible, we would like this retrenchment to take place at once – before the middle of this month, or at least before the First of June. We ask your hearty and cordial **[R5683 : page 140]** co-operation, and request that you remember in prayer those who are charged with the responsibilities of the Society's work, that wisdom and grace may be theirs in abundance.

While we have suggested that the work may a little later on be expanded, we should also add that it may quite as probably be still further contracted to effect a further reduction in the general expenses. Whatever is the Lord's will surely is our will. Let us show Him our faith, our confidence, our loyalty and our obedience.

The selection of names of those who might be spared from the work was no easy task to the Heads of the Departments charged with this responsibility. Like all human work it may be imperfect; but we are sure that it is done with an eye single to the Lord's pleasement, and we trust that He will overrule it to His praise and for the good of all concerned.

With much Christian love,
Your brother and servant in the Lord,
C. T. RUSSELL.

LOVING RESPONSE

To Our Beloved Pastor, from the Departing Seventy Members of
"The Bethel Family":

As we go forth from the hallowed precincts of the "Bethel Home" – hallowed by the remembrance of the many seasons of sweet communion with those whom the Heavenly Father has specially honored in placing in the fore-front of His mighty work in these closing days of this present world's history – it is with a feeling of joy and thankfulness for the many blessings and privileges which have been ours as members of the "Bethel Family." **[R5683 : page 141]**

As we reflect upon the Lord's abounding grace so freely and richly bestowed upon us as members of this household, and as we face the future with its prospects of Heavenly honors and glories, awaiting us – those who shall be accounted "conquerors, and more than conquerors" – there is, nevertheless, a tinge of sadness in parting with so many loved ones, and in leaving all we have called "Home".

Ah, well! we shall remember the kind and loving ministrations of yourself, dear Brother Russell, in the days to come, when separated from one another, we shall fight on in the good fight of faith.

It is the prayer of our hearts that the splendid example of Christian fortitude and self-sacrificing devotion in the service of the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren that you have shown, may ever be a cherished and shining image upon Memory's Scroll.

If ever a true and devoted servant of the Lord should be loved and honored for his work's sake, we believe it is yourself. When we think of the days and nights of years of toil, and pain, and weariness; and of the grandeur and world-wide scope of your services; how can we help but love and honor you!

We give thanks to our Heavenly Father for having raised up one who has been so wise and faithful in ministering to the Household of Faith and to us in particular who have been of the "Bethel" household.

And now, our dear Pastor, with these expressions of love and appreciation, we go forth with the prayer for Divine guidance upon you, and upon our way, that in the Lord's appointed time our journey's end shall be the Father's house of many mansions – the Heavenly Bethel – prepared for the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

God bless you and the dear remaining members of the "Bethel Family"!

Signed,

C. J. Woodworth,
F. F. Cook,
R. G. Jolly and the others.

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