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AN OPEN LETTER

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

If an obscure yet deeply interested reader of the W.T. may find space in its columns, I would like to address a few thoughts to other members of the little company, now waiting for the happy moment of union with our Lord. As I write, the thoughts seem to come with solemn force, that the time draws very near. Are we ready—are we seeking in every way possible to remove every little spot, and smooth every little wrinkle out of our own and each other's robes?

How important this moment! I have a word to the dear brethren who labor among us and are over us in the Lord: We esteem you very highly in love, for your works' sake, as Paul says is fitting. We examine with close scrutiny your words and communications, as they come through the TOWER from time to time, for we realize that God hath set you as watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem, which should never hold your peace day nor night, until he make Jerusalem (the heavenly and earthly) a praise in the whole earth. (Isa. 62:6,7.)

And again the Prophet says, Harken to the sound of the Watchman's trumpet. (Jer. 6:17.) In accordance with the command of the Prophet Joel (2:1) you have been blowing the trumpet in Zion, and sounding an alarm in God's holy mountain (among the true church of Christ) and some have heeded the call. Some have heeded in time to become members of the Bride of Christ, but still the trumpet is to sound until a company shall be developed, who will be the virgins, her companions that follow her. (Psa. 45:14.) Dear Brethren, let the trumpet give no *uncertain* sound, for in the words of Paul (1 Cor. 14:8) "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" We realize that there is a danger in the pathway of the preaching brethren, which does not beset other members of the body, and we have thought we have noticed a little tendency on the part of some as they have come amongst us, to be overcome in a measure by it—that is, the question that arose among some in the early church as to which should be greatest. Yes, here is a little mote of pride that renders uncertain to some, the otherwise clear trumpet tones of truth. O how sad that a little pride should crop out even here! Even our earnest brother Paul must have felt the power of this temptation, when he "feared lest having preached to others, he himself might become a castaway," and said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

It does seem that certain scriptures teach, that if the desire to sustain a human reputation were all sacrificed, and if the human will were all dead, and the divine mind and will were the only one

alive, the watchmen here would all see eye to eye: For the Prophet says, the watchman lift up the voice, *together* they cry aloud, because *eye to eye* they see, in Jehovah's turning back to Zion. (Isa. 52:8.) We recognize the present as the time of Jehovah's returning favor to Zion (the Jewish people).

Again we are told (John 16:13) "The Spirit ... will guide *you* (the Church) unto all truth (i.e., all truth due) and he will show you things to come" as well as things now due.

Will he guide a part of the church into truth and a part into error? No, the promise is that all shall be guided into truth. "Now (says Paul) I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the *same mind* and in the *same judgment*." (1 Cor. 1:10.) Is such a thing possible? Why not possible if the same spirit (the Spirit of God) dwell in us richly—if the one mind enters and animates these bodies in which the human mind and will are *dead*? If that were true, how could we have any other than *the same mind*, *the same judgment*.

Again he tells us (chap. 3:3) that if there is division among us, it is because we are carnal, and walk as men. (Read to vs. 10.) Therefore, "there should be no schism in the body ... and whether one member suffer all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. 12:24,25.) Dearly beloved, "Think the same thing, having the same love, united in soul, minding the *one* thing; doing nothing from party-spirit or vain glory: but in humility esteeming others as excelling yourselves; not each one regarding his own interests, but each one also those of others. Let this disposition be in us which was also in Jesus Christ." (Phil. 2:2,5, Diaglott.)

Do any inquire within themselves, who shall be greatest? Jesus replies that none shall have part in the kingdom, except the humble and that their rank and honor in the kingdom will be proportionate to their humility and service here (Matt. 18:3 and 23:11). Neither be ye called Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ; but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased, and he that abaseth himself shall be exalted."

Now a word to the flock: Let me inquire: how readest thou God's word, and the messages sent through the columns of the W.T. from month to month to help you to its understanding? Do we look into the glass and go away and forget what manner of man we are? Do we read God's word carelessly, or do we study it diligently, using the help provided? Our brethren spend thought, and time, and means, in endeavoring to assist us to such an understanding of the truth as will arm us against error: Do we spend an *equal* amount of time and effort in the study of the truth presented?

Nay—do we spend as much time in the study of one issue of the paper, as it must require to write one of the articles in it.

I fear sometimes that we do not half appreciate the value of the untiring zeal of these dear brethren in the Lord, in calling our attention to the blessed doctrines of God’s word, and in helping us to put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand in this evil day. Many are weak and easily carried about with every wind of doctrine and the cunning devices of crafty men (Eph. 4:14) simply because they have been negligent in the improvement of opportunities presented, for growth in knowledge and grace.

For myself I can say, the W.T. has been a means of incalculable blessing to me. Reasoning as it does from the Scripture, comparing the law and the prophets with the statements of Jesus and the Apostles, and unraveling the symbols of Revelation. In studying its pages before an open Bible, my faith has come to stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in *the power of God*. Is a new doctrine presented? I hear the voice of the Prophet—“To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” But thank God, when I turn to the law and to the testimony, I find them speaking according to that word, and walking in that light; and their light—*our* light—shines more and more. The old light is not extinguished when new light comes, but every added ray increases the glory.

We would find great advantage many times, in *critically* reading and *re-reading* many of the subjects treated in the paper. We cannot make these subjects our own with one reading, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip”—(Heb. 2:1) remembering that God hath given prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the *unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:11-13.)

May God bless and keep us all in perfect peace, having our minds stayed on him.

READER.

[Words fitly spoken—they command our attention and respect. EDITOR.]

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— October And November, 1881 —



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