

Remarks Regarding Pulpit and Pew as Viewed on the 1913 Transcontinental Tour

(The item directly below is by Pastor Russell, in the 1913 Convention Report, page 182.)

When it is remembered that the majority of the meetings here noted were held on week-days, the attendance surely indicated that the people had not lost their interest in the Bible and in religion, and that the falling off in the general Church attendance is therefore properly chargeable to another cause. We believe that the decrease in Church attendance, of which we hear so much, is chargeable to the fact that the public have lost their faith, as well they might, in the creeds of the Dark Ages. They are receiving no spiritual food. When the ministers preach to them along the lines of sociology, or astronomy, or science, the *pews*, as well educated and as well informed along these lines as are the *pulpiteers*, care little for the minister's dissertation.

Oh, that the ministers of today, instead of feeling angry against the Truth and fighting it, would investigate it thoughtfully and prayerfully! Then indeed they would be a power in the earth, in this, our wonderful day, in which God is sending out His Light and Truth to be the guide of His people, to guide them to His Holy Hill—the Kingdom of Messiah! What a power these ministers might be, if backed by the truth of God's Word!

How pitiable it seems that men so well equipped would be not only useless as respects the advancement of Christ's cause, but be really the leaders of the opposition thereto—ignorantly serving the Prince of Darkness! All the more, however, the Truth must be spoken. The beauty of the Truth must be exhibited; for it is the Power of God for the calling and electing and perfecting of the Bride class to be the Lamb's wife.

But while we must oppose the error, and must uncover its very foundations in our efforts to "show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light," nevertheless, let us all the more speak the Truth in love, without harshness, without personalities. Our dear brethren are deluded, deceived, not *intentionally* opposing the *Truth* we believe. How glad we shall be for the day when the great Adversary, who deceived us all and is still deceiving so many, will be bound for a thousand years, as promised!—Rev. 20:1-3.

Words of Caution

This may be as good an opportunity as any for a few words of caution. We are all in danger of going to extremes, and all should remember the Apostle's words, "Let your moderation be known unto all." At one place we found that a spirit of antagonism had been aroused by means of immoderate statements on the part of a few. They had suggested that Brother Russell and his writings are divinely inspired as were the Apostles

of old. What a great mistake! No wonder such statements were resented! When asked if such were our opinion, we promptly assured the dear friends to the contrary.

The view we have always presented, and still hold, is that the Lord Jesus appointed only twelve Apostles, St. Paul being the one to take Judas' place. The words of these would be so supervised by Divine Power that whatsoever they would declare binding on earth, the Church would know would be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they would declare on earth to be loosed or not binding, they might know would not be obligatory in the sight of Heaven. In other words, those twelve Apostles were the special mouthpieces of the Lord to His Church. They still speak to us. We need no others; we expect no others.

The most we have ever claimed for our own presentations, written or oral, is that they are in line with the words of the Apostles, that they harmonize with them—that we keep so close to the words of the Apostles and the words of our Lord that our Message may be said to be their Message, except in respect to the particular words used and the arrangement of them. In the *Studies in the Scriptures* we have classified the various presentations of Jesus, the Apostles and Prophets into different studies or topics; and this is what we meant when we declared in an old *Watch Tower* that, on this account, whoever reads the *Studies in the Scriptures* is really reading the Bible in an arranged form—topically. In no case have we ever presented anything as of ourselves. In every instance we have fastened our presentations to the Scriptures on which they depend and rest.

Our claim has been, and is, that because we are living in the dawn of the New Dispensation, it is the divine will that the Mystery of God should now be finished, in the sense of reaching a completion, or unfolding. This we hold comes to us, not through special inspiration to speak or to write new things, but by the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, enlightening us and directing us to the Lord's Word, and assisting us to see the proper application of the same. The wonderful light of our day upon every subject undoubtedly inures to these ends.

Because it is due time, the Lord would send the light to His people, and as usual, would send it through some earthly instrumentality. If, in the Divine providence, we have been used or shall be used of the Lord, it will be in making clear the sayings of inspiration already written, and not in making any new revelations or prophecies.

We take this opportunity, also, to guard the dear friends against the report that we are making any different presentations by letter than we have made in *The Watch Tower* and the *Studies in the Scriptures*. If any claim to have such letter, ask to see the letter, and refuse to receive as from me anything contradictory to the *Studies in the Scriptures* and *The Watch Tower*. If we ever see the necessity to make changes, we will preferably do this in public print rather than in private letters or in private conversation. Let us stick to the written word in the scriptures as well as *The Watch Tower* publications.

You don't have to tell how you live each day,
You don't have to say if you work or you play;
A tried, true barometer serves in the place –
However you live, it will show in your face.

The false, the deceit that you bear in your heart
Will not stay inside where it first got a start;
For sinew and blood are a thin veil of lace
What you wear in your heart, you wear in your face.

If your life is unselfish, if for others you live,
For not what you get, but how much you can give;
If you live close to God in His infinite grace—
You don't have to tell it, it shows in your face.
—Author Unknown.