

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE LORD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

DEAR BRETHREN IN THE LORD:

Loving greetings in the Master's Name !

Following we present a copy of a petition which we have sent to Bro. Rutherford and the four deposed Directors of the Society. This petition has been prepared after prayerful and careful consideration and with an earnest desire to see the distressing controversy which has shocked and grieved us, and no doubt all of you, settled in a just and equitable manner.

Most of the undersigned reside in Brooklyn and the immediate vicinity and have had abundant opportunity to view the injurious influence of these unsettled questions here in our midst. We have seen this controversy grow until it now seriously threatens the harmony of the New York City Ecclesia; we have seen a growing coldness and lack of sympathetic understanding developing amongst brethren we feel sure possess the spirit of the Lord, and we have heard of similar conditions elsewhere. Our hearts are grieved beyond measure by these conditions. What shall we do?

The issues are not so clear that we can quickly judge as to the right and put these matters out of our minds. It is impossible for us who know the character of the brethren who differ with the present management of the Society to accept the suggestions made by some who superficially view the matter, namely that "they have gone out of the Truth"; that they are "opposed to the Channel," etc. We know to the contrary, that they love the Lord and are endeavoring to serve Him and His people daily.

What then can be done to decide the important principles involved and to bring this great controversy to an end? How can we assist our brethren to right what is wrong and become able to again dwell together in purity and unity and so to become reconciled to one another? How can we take our stand as the Lord's people in an effort to thwart the evident intention of our Adversary to distract our minds from "the better things"--the Lord's Word and the service of the Truth? Will this be accomplished by closing our eyes and ears to the trouble and permitting prejudice or ignorance to sway us to one side or the other, and thus "*judge* the matter before we *hear* it"? We are convinced, dear brethren, that the course which will have the Lord's approval and accomplish His Will is to follow His Word and "hear" these questions which have arisen between our brethren and render an impartial decision.

To us it seems clear that both sides of this controversy have appealed the case for settlement to

the Lord's people in general. We have a responsibility, therefore, to render such assistance as we call in harmony with Matt. 18: 15-17, and Bro. Russell's comments thereon in Volume 6. We cannot all meet and give these questions our united attention; but we *can* urge that an impartial committee hear the matter and present their findings, decision and recommendations to the Shareholders meeting in Pittsburgh, which is as near a full assembly of the Church in the flesh as it is possible to have.

The suggestion may be made that such a committee could be appointed and a hearing had at the Pittsburgh meeting in January. A little reflection, however, will convince that this would be impossible. Sufficient time could not be devoted there for an orderly and thorough hearing. Unless this committee is appointed *before* the January meeting and has time to thoroughly investigate these questions, which are of such importance to us as the Lord's people, we *will not have the information we need* to intelligently express the Lord's choice for Directors and Officers, and His mind on other matters which may come before the Convention.

Do *you* wish to help in securing a fair hearing and settlement of this controversy? You can do so if you will.

The proposed "straw vote" to be taken on Nov. 21, 1917, will require us, unless we refuse to vote for any of those who are concerned in this controversy, to cast our votes for brethren as Directors and Officers of the Society (who if elected, will occupy positions as general overseers of the Church throughout the world), who are lying under serious charges, which should prevent their being elected as Elders in any local congregation, until these are heard and disposed of. This would not be in harmony with good order according to the Lord's Word.

The real election comes in January; the "straw vote" on Nov. 21 is not necessary; nor, under the circumstances, does it seem wise. Instead of taking part in this vote at that time we suggest to the friends that they present in their local meeting a resolution embodying a petition to Brother Rutherford and the deposed Directors for the appointment of an Investigation Committee, as is proposed below. If this resolution is passed, see that a copy is forwarded to Brooklyn. If you wish to further show your approval of this action, *send a personal request* to Bro. Rutherford and the other brethren.

The Lord may use this means to enable all concerned to come to an amicable understanding and agreement, by clearing away all evil, in fact as well as in thought, and, by righting all wrong, so make it possible for love to operate effectively in us all. This will, we think, tend to clear the reputations of the brethren on both sides, whom we dearly love in the Lord and whose welfare we seek, and to the great relief, comfort and blessing of His people everywhere.

With much love and praying for you and us all the Lord's guidance and blessing and an ever-increasing measure of His Spirit, we are

Your brethren in the Lord,
(For signatures see following petition)

A PETITION TO BRO. RUTHERFORD AND THE FOUR DEPOSED DIRECTORS OF THE W. T. B. & T. SOCIETY

DEAR BRETHREN :--

The undersigned, together with many others throughout the world, have been greatly distressed by the controversy which has arisen among the Directors and Officers of the Society as constituted at the time our dear Brother Russell left us about a year ago and since, and which has involved the good reputation of all of you and a number of other brethren whose standing among the Lord's people has been good heretofore. It seems to us the great need at this time is to seek the Lord's instructions and, acting in harmony therewith, use your best and united efforts to secure a just, impartial hearing and settlement of the matters which have troubled, and which continue to distress, the Lord's people throughout the world, and even threaten the unity of the congregations in some places.

The necessity for prompt action looking toward such a hearing of the persons and matters under criticism is especially apparent in view of the near approach of the annual election of Directors and Officers of the Society; and that owing to the several publications which have been sent out by the parties to this controversy, the reputations of all have been impaired. and at present it is impossible for many, including the undersigned, to harmonize the statements of these opposing papers. as they are quite contradictory. This very fact puts all of you at a disadvantage as respects the coming election. Some of the friends are disposed to place the greater confidence in the publications of Brother Rutherford, and are thus prejudiced against the other brethren; while the reverse is true of other friends, who have greater confidence in the statements of the deposed Directors and others.

Such a condition, and especially that we and the other friends throughout the world should nominate and elect as Directors and Officers of the Society brethren now lying under such serious charges, as all of you are, seems to us the reverse of good order in the Church, as outlined in the Lord's Word and Brother Russell's expositions in Volume Six. The Directors and Officers of the Society surely occupy as

responsible a position in the Church as an Elder in a local congregation. practically the only difference being that the Elders' sphere is local, while the representatives of the Society have a general charge as respects the oversight of the Church throughout the world. The character requirements of these officers of the Society should, then, be quite as stringent as if they were being elected as Elders in a local congregational election. Brother Russell points out in Volume Six, page 418, that slander against an Elder of a congregation is a slander against the congregation electing him. It is apparent to all that serious charges have been brought against all of you and other representatives of the Society; and thus the entire Church has become involved and has a responsibility regarding the hearing and judging of these.

We are aware that the claim of all of you, no doubt, is that your circulation of uncomplimentary statements about the other side was not slander and evil-speaking, as it would have been, had you taken this course as elders of some local congregation. We presume that your thought in publishing these statements which have so shocked the Church, was that you had used every effort to settle matters amicably among yourselves without avail, and that you were in these papers appealing the case to the Church in general, whose officers, in a sense, you were. However, instead of clearing the question, these papers have made it more confusing to the friends, including ourselves. They contain numerous contradictions one of the other. A question which comes with great force to us is, How are we under these circumstances to judge righteously in this matter and express the Lord's choice in our votes for Directors and Officers of the Society? We would not wish to have any serving in that capacity who do not possess a large degree of the Lord's Spirit, or who are guilty of misrepresentation and falsehood. Consider the matter from our standpoint, laying all personal feelings aside. Can you not see our dilemma? And will you not help us out of it and to take part in the election in an intelligent manner and thus express, as nearly as we are able to do, the mind of the Lord?

How can we arrive at the truth as respects the questions and persons involved in this controversy, and how can we be informed as to how best to carry forward the work which was so ably started and supervised for many years by the Lord's special servant, our dear Brother Russell? We believe this could be accomplished by the appointment of a representative committee of brethren, Shareholders of the Society, to hear the evidence regarding the matters under controversy, including the activities of the Society and its Officers during the past year; that to this committee (chosen as hereafter outlined) should be given full information as to the Society's financial condition, organization, legal status, relation to the People's Pulpit Association, the foreign Branches-in fact, as to all matters necessary to a

thorough understanding of the Society's work and its sphere of activity as a channel of Truth organized by Brother Russell for the carrying forward of the work which he, in the Lord's providence, initiated and was made responsible for; and that this committee, after hearing all matters and ascertaining the truth as respects the contradictory statements which have been published, should make a full report to the assembled Shareholders at Pittsburgh on January 4, the day before the election of Directors and Officers is to take place.

Our desire in suggesting this course is that we and all of the Lord's people may have our minds set at rest respecting the difficulties which have arisen in the last few months, that the breach between the brethren concerned may be healed and that the Shareholders shall have such information, both as to the activities of the past year, the present state of the Society, and the possibilities of the future, as will enable them to wisely plan for the continuance of the work, and elect as Directors and Officers, brethren whose reputations are clear of such stains as are now upon the reputation of many of those who have been prominent and efficient in the work of the Society in the past.

In harmony with the above, we respectfully request that you arrange for an Investigation Committee to be composed as follows :

Brother Rutherford to choose three (3) members.

The four deposed Directors to choose three (3) members.

These six (6) brethren to elect another.

The seven (7) thus constituted to choose by election the remaining members of the committee, which we suggest number in all, 15. (This is suggested as a reasonably large committee to hear and report on such important matters, and seems in harmony with Brother Russell's views on a similar question namely, the committee constituted to hear and judge charges against any member of the Editorial Committee of the Watch Tower, which would approximate that number.)

That these brethren be chosen because of their known soundness in the Truth, faithfulness to the Lord's work and possession of a good measure of His Spirit; that they be charged both by the principles in the controversy and those whom they would represent namely, the Church in general and especially the Shareholders, to hear the matter without prejudice, and in the fear of the Lord to render their decision, and to report the same, together with their recommendations, to the Shareholders' meeting in Pittsburgh on January 4.

That this committee be called together as quickly as possible, so that ample time may be had for the hearing and careful weighing of all evidence presented, and the formulating of their report and recommendations.

With Christian love and praying for you and us all
the Lord's guidance and blessing,

Your brethren in the Lord,

E. O. KUEHN
GENEVIEVE SANFORD
H. F. ROCKWELL
H. CLAY ROCKWELL
LILLIAN CURTIS
VIOLA CURTIS
EMILY M. SINNOCK
LAURA I. MAITLAND
FRANCES L. MAITLAND
ISABEL M. PAINE
MINNIE M. EIBEL
GRACE ALEXANDER
J. M. BERRY
FRED L. MASON
M. ALICE BANKS
SAMUEL LEVINE
CORR A. KUEHN
IDA MILLS
ANNIE H. ESTWICK
HATTIE HENDERSON
RUTH HENDERSON
J. L. COOKE
W. J. HOLLISTER
GRACE A. HOLLISTER
J. SHAW
M. J. MORRISON
F. RAFTERY
PRUDENCE RAFTERY
C. C. HARRISON
E. V. DYER
M. DAHL
EDITH HOSKINS
COREY MITCHELL
NORMA G. MITCHELL
MRS. C. C. BEALE
MRS. W. GREGORY
HARRY EHLERS
V. S. COBB
G. M. BRAND
DOROTHY N. COOKE
MABEL COOKE
C. W. M. HARRISON
H. M. COMER
EMMA COMER
BENJ. BOULTER
W. REDWOOD
F. H. WEST
G. L. WILEY
LUELLE RAMBO
BENJ. McCLELLAN
THEO. WALLACE
W. S. BARCUS
E. NICHOLS
C. R. NICHOLS
M. A. THOMSON
H. W. NEWMAN
MRS. H. W. NEWMAN
W. A. RENGELLY

A. E. BURGESS
LAURA W. BURGESS
GEORGE AVERY
J. S. AVERY
PERCY READ
F. CLARK
EDITH M. READ
E. CHRISTIE
HANNAH A. PATTEN
NIEL McNAUGHTON
S. W. McNAUGHTON
S. W. MONAHAN
K. BELL
E. McKAY
W. A. LANGILLE
M. S. PERROW
F. S. BARRET
EMILY J. MASON
MARIA C. LUNDQUIST
J. YAMASOCKEY
S. M. HAWN
MARIA ROBERTS
GEORGE RORERTS
LOISE GAFFELNIN
M. CARLSON
M. E. WEST
C. H. WEST
F. A. LINNEI.L
J. PERROW
M. E. PERROW
L. LIMPER
MARION CAMP
E. M. FIELD
MARY HYNDMAN
ELIZABETH HAM
MRS. F. GREENVILLE
F. GREENVII.LE
E. T. BETTS
SOPHIE GREBE
RUTH I. GALBRAITH
CLARA RAFTERY
LIBERTA MICHAELS
MINNIE REIMANN
JAMES H. BUCKMAN
C. E. JONES
WM. J. COOK
E. B. RAFTERY
FLORENCE ROGERS
JULIUS GRAEVES
CHARLOTTE GRAEVES
E. KERR
MARION F. MASON
IDA C. SOLL
E. M. BAUER
J. SHAW
J. SHEFFIELD
M. CAMERON
G. NELSON
A. E. HAZEL
FRED. G. MASON
MARTIN FISCHER
MARTHA THOMAS

EVELYN PANTING
JAMES A. PANTING
CORR M. REID
GWENDOLYN WALLACE
ELIZABETH STANARD
MARY E. BARCUS
EMMA LANDRUM
JOHANNA W. COOK
MARGARET HOLDEN
ELIZA BOLTE
JOHANNA SARGENT
W. L. SARGENT
ALVINA KLUDAS
F. C. KLUDAS
TILLIE B. PHILLIPS
EMILE LAVEALLE
ELIZA A. MARVIN
EDNA MARVIN
JOHN DAHLSTROM
HILMA DAHLSTROM
JOS. HOLDEN
A. LASSANE
CHAS. R. COATES
RETHA E. DALTON
JOHANNE OLSEN KJETSAA
MARIE ANDERSON
SCOTT CHAPMAN
SARAH S. C. CHAPMAN
W. J. MASON
G. H. SHOLL
D. E. BRIDGE
SUSIE M. COATES
MARGARET BIRD
MINNIE S. BUCKMAN
JOHN WARNER
W. A. HALL