

SUMMARY OF A MEETING

IN RELATION TO THE WORK
OF THE STOW HILL DEPOT

Park Street, London, September 21st, 1954

Summary of Document

Starting from the next column, this is a machine-searchable, slightly enlarged near-facsimile of a document describing a meeting convened to discuss some of the problems that concerned the Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, which used to publish all the ministry of the Taylor Branch of Exclusive Brethren.

The meeting were told of the disputed editorial changes that had been made to ministry of James Taylor, and there was mention of doubts about the authenticity of the notes that appear in the J. N. Darby Bible. They also discussed whether the magazine *Notes of Readings in New York* would still be published now that Mr Taylor Senior was no longer alive, but this was seen as a decision for Mr Parker.

In relation to the principles on which the Depot operated, it was said that about 22 years earlier, Mr. Taylor had pointed out that the element of profit-making or commercialism in the house of God was utterly foreign and abhorrent to the Lord, and that the provision of spiritual ministry in printed form for the benefit of the saints ought not to be made a matter of personal gain.

There were also some figures quoted that indicate the size of the market for the Stow Hill publications. The magazines *Words of Grace and Comfort* and *Words of Truth* each sold 16,500 copies a month, and *Notes of Readings in New York* sold 13,500 per month. There were nearly 4,000 regular accounts, many of which were for very small amounts, and in the previous year 21,000 invoices had been rendered. During the previous twelve years about 100,000 New Translation Bibles have been sold.

I have preserved the original page numbers and page breaks, but not the original line breaks.

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Certain exercises having become current, in relation to the conduct of the Depot, the trustees invited a number of representative brethren from all parts of the British Isles to be present at a meeting so that these exercises might be dealt with and the brethren generally informed as to the lines on which the issue of printed ministry is carried on.

After Mr. Gardiner had opened the meeting in prayer, he briefly referred to the fact that Mr. A. Beattie had recently resigned his trusteeship of the Depot, after 17 years' service, during which he had devoted himself much to its work.

He then said that the trustees felt it to be due to the Lord and to the saints that they should acknowledge the wrong that had been done at the Depot in the past in making certain alterations to manuscripts of Mr. Taylor's ministry, sent for publication, without his knowledge. Although these mainly referred to matters that came to light and were gone into in 1942, some of them had subsequently assumed special importance owing to their relation to the truth as to the Spirit. The matters in question were principally concerned with Numbers 21 : 17 and Ephesians 1 : 22. As regards the former, certain allusions by Mr. Taylor to verse 3 of hymn 126 (old book, now No. 191) which then read "Praises for the Holy Ghost," as embodying the spirit of praise to the Spirit, were omitted, and in the August 1942 number of the "New York Readings," a remark by Mr. Taylor as to singing to the Spirit, according to Numbers 21 : 17, was altered to "we respond in song to the Spirit's movements and suggestions in assembly" which was not what Mr. Taylor said or thought. As regards Ephesians 1 : 22, certain significant alterations, affecting our understanding of that verse, were made, unknown to the trustees, in an edition of the pamphlet, "Names of Divine

Persons," and in the N.Y. Reading of October 1941 on "Divine Names." These were corrected in a subsequent reprint.

Certain lengthy extracts from letters written by Mr. Taylor at the time were then read out to the brethren, and these very clearly showed that Mr. Taylor was bringing forward the thought of addressing the Spirit as long ago as 1942. Indeed, there is evidence in some of his writings that it was in his mind considerably earlier than this. In a letter dated July 31st, 1942, Mr. Taylor said "While I fully admit that there is little said in Scripture about singing to the Spirit, there is something said, and this should be fully recognised. The well in Numbers 21 undoubtedly refers to the Spirit, and this should not be ignored." Then on September 2nd, 1942, he wrote, "Singing to the well, or in type to the Spirit, is not simply responding in song to the Spirit's movements and suggestions but to the Spirit Himself."

Mr. Gardiner then said that the present trustees felt they should acknowledge freely to the brethren that had the remarks by Mr. Taylor, on the subject of singing to the Spirit, not been deleted or altered, the saints generally would have been aware earlier of the way the truth was taking form in Mr. Taylor's mind, and it is probable that exercise would have taken place then with saints generally that would have facilitated the earlier bringing forward of the truth in ministry and made it easier for Mr. Taylor in 1947, and since, to develop the truth as to addressing the Holy Spirit.

Other examples of alterations of manuscripts sent for publication had come to light, and these indicated that there had been undue and unnecessary editing at the Depot, and this raised the whole question of the respective rights and obligations of authors, editors and publishers. It was recognised that there was a responsibility attaching at all times to the Depot, as the publisher, to make a critical examination of anything submitted for publication, but that nothing (except obvious errors of a minor kind) should be altered without prior reference either to the editor, in the case of the magazines, or author, in the case of other matter.

The trustees felt they were under obligation to acknowledge

all these facts to the brethren and to assure them that every care was now being taken to ensure that nothing of the kind would happen again.

The notes in the New Translation Bible were then referred to, since there has been a measure of doubt with some as to the reliability and authenticity of these. The manuscripts and records, by which all could have been verified, were unfortunately lost when the Paternoster Row Depot was destroyed during the war, but Mr. Gardiner said that careful enquiry had been made and he had been assured that every one of the notes had been passed by the three brothers who undertook to go through them before the first Stow Hill edition of the New Translation was published. These three brothers were Mr. C. A. Coates, Dr. C. C. Elliott, and Mr. Edward Raven, all of whom were now with the Lord. The notes were based on the New Translation Bible, published by Morrish in 1890, supplemented by some of Mr. Darby's notes taken from the French and German editions of his New Translation. The notes in Morrish's 1890 Bible contained many words in Hebrew and Greek characters, and many allusions to various manuscripts, and in order that they might be serviceable to the average reader careful examination of them was made by the three brothers mentioned, the latter two of whom were known to be Greek scholars. The reference to "reliable sources" in the introductory notice to the New Translation (which was written by Mr. Coates) was thought to refer especially to Mr. Wigram's concordances of the Old and New Testaments, though other similar works of reference may be included. It was remarked that as Mr. Taylor had questioned the accuracy of one of these notes (note "w" in 2 Corinthians 11 : 5) and it had not been found possible to trace its source, it had been omitted from the last reprint of the New Translation.

An account was then given of the work in hand and the books to be published in the near future. These included several volumes of Mr. Taylor's ministry, one of which, "Readings on Romans," was quite old but which had only recently come to light. Selections from the ministry of Mr. S. McCallum and Mr. G. R. Cowell were also in hand, as well

as the notes of the July meetings at the Central Hall. The reprinting of Mr. Taylor's early ministry in the New Series volumes, and the reprinting of J.N.D.'s "Collected Writings" were being continued, and the reprinting of Mr. Stoney's letters was being commenced. All this was, of course, in addition to the publication of gospel tracts and of the monthly magazines, the circulation of these being 16,500 for each of "Words of Grace and Comfort" and "Words of Truth" and 13,500 for "Notes of Readings in New York." In answer to an enquiry as to whether this last booklet was to continue under its present title, now that Mr. Taylor is no longer living, it was remarked that that was primarily a matter for Mr. Parker, but it was understood he intended to condense the notes of the present readings in New York, thereby making room for the regular inclusion of some of Mr. Taylor's ministry, a fair supply of which was still in his possession. It was also understood that Mr. Parker was considering whether any change in title was desirable.

It was then felt to be profitable to reiterate to the brethren the principles upon which the Depot is operated. About 22 years ago, Mr. Taylor pointed out that the element of profit-making or commercialism in the house of God was utterly foreign and abhorrent to the Lord, and that the provision of spiritual ministry in printed form for the benefit of the saints ought not to be made a matter of personal gain. Scriptures such as John 2: 14-17, and Zechariah 14 : 21 would confirm this. It was on this basis that the Stow Hill Depot commenced in December, 1931, and has continued ever since. (This opportunity is taken of referring to a pamphlet on this subject, written by Mr. Taylor at the time, and which has now been reprinted in "New Series" Volume 13, page 187. It might be mentioned that during the eighteen months prior to December, 1931, a few books of Mr. Taylor's ministry had been published at cost price by one or two brothers with his approval and it became evident that if the cost of the ministry were lowered the circulation would be greatly increased.) For reasons of convenience and practical working the Depot is operated under the terms of a Trust Deed, which provides that no profit is to be made, and also that there is to be no distribution in any form of gain to the trustees. Books of

ministry are now published at as near cost price as possible, and where it is thought desirable they are subsidised, and this also applies to gospel tracts, the gifts from the brethren enabling all this to be done. It was remarked that, at the moment, the trustees were well placed as regards needed capital, but that a steady moderate flow of gifts was desirable if the service of the Depot was to be continued according to the principles upon which it works.

The importance was stressed of there being some brother in each locality who should take upon himself the service, not only of getting books for the brethren as they are required, but of making it a matter of personal service to the Lord and to the saints to bring before the brethren in an active way what is available to them in the way of ministry, and commending it to them. It was known that, in many places, this is already being done well, but it was felt that if it was taken up everywhere in a more energetic way, it would greatly add to the value of the Depot as seeking to bring the present mind of the Spirit before the saints. It would, in effect, mean that the Depot had a representative in each locality, and it was pointed out that the Depot would be helped if orders for ministry went through this brother rather than being sent direct to Kingston. This would effect an appreciable saving in labour and expense, and, while the arrangement certainly could not be insisted upon, it should be encouraged. It was, however, not only a matter of personal preferences, but it depended on the general efficiency of the brother carrying on the service in the locality. The trustees were anxious to collaborate in this scheme and, as a start, were proposing to send a specimen copy of each new publication to the brother concerned, charging it to his account.

The possibility of bringing the Depot back to London, or at least of having a showroom in London where specimen books could be seen, was raised. The advantages of such an arrangement for those working in London, or visiting it regularly, were obvious, but it was equally clear that the active services of brethren in the various localities, as outlined in the previous paragraph, would have a much wider influence than any Depot in London. On the other hand, it was recognised that

a readily-accessible Depot or showroom would be of value to brethren visiting this country from overseas and would also give more opportunity for our ministry to be seen and purchased by enquiring Christians who are not with us. As the discussion proceeded, and various brothers expressed their minds, it became clear that there was a general desire for some place in London where available ministry could be examined, and the trustees agreed to look carefully into the best ways and means of providing this, and said that they would gladly consider any practical suggestion that might be made.

A request was made for some more of Mr. Raven's ministry to be reprinted, and several confirmed the desirability of this. There was also a request that some of the ministry of Mr. Coates, at present only available in duplicated form, might be printed. The printing or reprinting of a few other publications was mentioned and, although the trustees agreed to consider carefully every suggestion, it was pointed out that unless the demand was likely to run into a few thousand copies, it was hardly an economical proposition to print. There was also a limit, not only on what the Depot could handle, but on what the brethren could absorb.

On the more practical side of the Depot's activities, it was remarked that there were, at the moment, nearly 4,000 regular accounts, many of which were for very small amounts, and that last year 21,000 invoices were rendered. During the past twelve years about 100,000 New Translation Bibles have been sold. Practically all of the Depot's sales are despatched by parcel post, G.P.O. vans usually calling twice a day. The cost of postage is reckoned as one of the overheads which are taken into account in arriving at the cost at which the books are sold.

A question was raised about printing ministry in other languages, bearing in mind that our outlook is the whole church of God, but this was not felt to be a practical proposition nor to be in keeping with the general principle that such work should normally be taken up within the countries concerned. At the same time, it was realised that where there were only a relatively few brethren among whom the cost of

printing the ministry could be spread, the price of each book became very high. It was thought that such conditions might be eased by financial help from those able and exercised to provide it, but that it was hardly a matter which could be taken up by the Depot as such.

A few other matters were raised, and to all of them the trustees agreed to give full consideration, it being their desire that the saints should be served to the best advantage.

A. J. GARDINER.
WM. HENDERSON.
G. H. S. PRICE.

Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, 5, Fife Road, Kingston-on-Thames

Made and Printed in England