

P. S. L. JOHNSON'S Pamphlet,

**"Harvest Siftings Reviewed,"
itself reviewed**

By J. H E M E R Y.

Bro. Johnson has favoured me, in common with many others, with a copy of his pamphlet, "Harvest Siftings Reviewed." No doubt he intends that the text quoted from 2 Cor. 6 should be taken as corresponding to his experience as well as that of the Apostle Paul, but the text is not common to himself; it also belongs to others, and by his pamphlet he puts others in the same experience. My reason for writing these remarks is because Bro. Johnson does not keep to the truth, and because through this it seems necessary to make some comment upon his review. In his pamphlet, which may be said to be chiefly a vindication of himself against "Harvest Siftings," he is unfortunate; for whatever his desire may have been (and he declares he seeks the truth) he has, in my case, not managed to keep to the truth. He has distorted sayings, recorded events out of their true relationship, and in some cases has made statements which are directly untruthful. To traverse in detail would be a great task, which must be left undone. I have no special desire to vindicate myself, and were the interests of the Lord's work not in question, I would pay but little attention to Bro. Johnson's untruths and distortions. These remarks of mine are printed to save time in explanation, and will be used only as seems right according to the leadings of the Lord's providence. While some of the brethren know Bro. Johnson and me well enough to know how to choose where a question of veracity comes in, others do not; and his statement is written with such assumption of loving goodwill that some may be deceived by it.

Bro. Johnson declares that Bro. Rutherford treated him harshly, and he tells in some detail of hard treatment received. I, who know Bro. Rutherford, do not believe Bro. Johnson's statements; especially so since, as I shall state in some detail here, he has so persistently told untruths about my actions, and about what happened here during his visit.

In his conclusion, on page nineteen, he says that what he has set forth is a truthful statement. I suppose he must have credit for believing in himself, but how he can say it as before the Lord is a puzzle to me. I say again, from his first statement to his last, nearly all his references to me are either partially or wholly untrue.

My letters to Bro. Rutherford, and the statements I made in the Tabernacle which are published in "Harvest Siftings" are truthful, unvarnished accounts of what was done here. I repeat what I said there, that I treated Bro. Johnson as a faithful brother, and accepted him as a good servant of the Lord, and I co-operated with him in all that he called for until he claimed to be the "Steward," and refused to accept Bro. Rutherford's and the Society's authority. My changed attitude towards him was wholly because of the persistence of his claims, and because of his interference in the Society's business after he was discredited. I was kind to him all the time until he went into opposition to Head Office authority; whatever break there was in the personal relationship was wholly his fault, and through my refusing to compromise with him in his attitude of rebellion. In my opinion Bro. Johnson made his greatest mistake at this point. There could be no question about Bro. Rutherford's superior position as the one appointed by vote to the Presidency. Bro. Johnson declared he was willing to be humiliated if he were wrong. If then, Bro. Rutherford were in error, Bro. Johnson should have continued in his attitude of submission to authority. The cancelled orders should have been taken as the Lord's providence for him. If then he had submitted, and had gone back to America, he would have been able to continue his work in the Harvest Field; the Lord would have blessed him for his submission, and he would not have needed to have written twenty pages of matter to vindicate himself. That he needed not to have concern for the British work might have been apparent to him, but in any case his chief concern should have been to have taken the Lord's leading. The Lord knows what was the true intent of his mind, but it is plain that his failure to accept the cabied authority, and the fact that, in the face of it, his work in the Churches

of Britain must of necessity be finished, looks more like the result of pride than of a desire to attend to the Lord's work. He persisted in an endeavour to push open a closed door, bringing confusion in the office, trouble in the home, distress amongst the family and London friends, and pain throughout the whole of the British Field. Looking back over the situation with a full view of the distressing circumstances and painful results, I cannot see that there could have been a better course taken with him than that which was taken—except, indeed, that a harder course might justly have been followed. In the office he dealt with matters which he did not understand, and it was found impossible to get a correctly balanced account for the time when he had control of the mails. I have no doubt that there was no more than the forty pounds of the Society's money paid out, but we neither have a voucher to show that that sum was paid, nor are all the sheets of the daily takings completed.

I now briefly review some of the statements which Bro. Johnson makes relative to myself and the British Field. His first reference to me, on page four, begins the list. He says I wrote certain things to Bro. Russell. I did not write to Bro. Russell these things stated by Bro. Johnson; and if Bro. Johnson's statements when he was in Britain were true, his present statement is not, for he told us that Bro. Russell had not said anything to him about the London work, and that he was in ignorance of affairs until he arrived here. All I said to Bro. Russell, in a very short note, was that there was a movement afoot here which to me marked lack of loyalty. On the same page, in the second column, Bro. Johnson says that I was an ardent helper against Bro. Shearn and Crawford. This is not true. I co-operated with him as the Society's representative; further, I believed the Lord was dealing with the situation here; but I was careful to keep myself from interfering in that which was to me the Lord's work, because I was waiting upon the Lord for Him to undertake a deliverance which I felt was needed. If there was more evidence from me than from outsiders as to things in the office, that is only to be expected. I know that my changed attitude towards Bro. Johnson after February 26th was a great disappointment to him. My letter to him telling him that I should have to oppose him in his claim to be "Steward" was the first check in his soaring to the great heights which he saw before him. On this same page again Bro. Johnson says "the congregation unanimously voted me confidence and appreciation for what I had done." That

is not true. The Tabernacle congregation did almost unanimously vote inviting Bro. Johnson to address them again on the matters which were in controversy; but that is a different thing from saying they finally approved of all he had done, and thanked him for it. However, the congregation as a whole did accept the result of Bro. Johnson's endeavour, while they disagreed with the extravagance of his manner and methods. Again on this same page, at the bottom of column two, Bro. Johnson states that he advised with me over the matter of the dismissal of Bro. Shearn and Crawford. He neither asked for, nor got, any advice from me. His further statement (on the top of page five), where he says I suggested a certain addition to his letter, is a direct untruth: there is not the slightest foundation for it. The letters from me which he quotes on page five I agree with, and I am glad for once to be able to say that I can agree with his review. The Glasgow meeting, to which reference is made on page six, was arranged partly because Bro. Johnson so plainly intimated his desire to go back and speak there in a larger hall. The reason for the cancellation of the meeting, even though the advertising matter was printed, was because the Glasgow Elders were convinced that there was something wrong with Bro. Johnson's mind. They had heard of his Liverpool declaration as to the Stewardship; and also because, before this, there were strange reports about him, chiefly because he talked so much about himself. Thus the brethren in Britain were beginning to feel that which Bro. Rutherford felt when he got Bro. Johnson's strange cables—they thought he was getting weak in his mind. It was not at his suggestion that the meeting was cancelled.

Bro. Johnson is correct in saying he worked hard. He did not spare himself at all, nor did he spare others. While he was here I had a hard time of it, for he was continually at me night and day either about his tours, or his types.

On page seven, and column one, Bro. Johnson says that Brother and Sister Hemery, Bro. Hemery's typist, and two brothers who transcribed the minutes, told him that the commission reported in his favour. I deny this absolutely. I did not know what the findings of the commission were, and my stenographer in honour said not a word to me, and I have all confidence in her declaration that she said not a word to anyone, but kept her vow of secrecy which she made to the commissioners. Then there were not two brothers who took the minutes: there was only one, and that brother

pleases to speak of as inferiors. Nor do I believe that during the same period could half a dozen instances be brought where I have *ordered* anyone to do anything. (I am not conscious of a single instance.) My way with the brethren, over whose work I may be said to have had some care, has always been to *request* a thing be done, often giving an explanation why it should be done. If it were worth while, I would challenge Bro. Johnson to produce a single instance of insubordination, or a single instance of my ordering anyone to do anything. I have always sought to treat those with whom I work as brothers and sisters—indeed, part of the trouble that we had in the London office was because of my persistency in this attitude, and my resistance of a dominating spirit in others, which would make some masters and some servants.

On page nine, second column, Bro. Johnson says that he did not dismiss me. True, he did not; but that was simply because I, of course, paid no attention to his dismissal. He used the word a dozen times to me. Then he saw the futility of this, and he used the word "suspension." Nor had *this* any effect upon me; though, through Bro. Johnson persuading some members of the Bethel family of his claims, he was for some days able to keep control of the mails. Bro. Johnson says that, before the Bethel family, I snapped my fingers at him saying, "Bro. Johnson, you are that!" and adds his own veracity to it, saying, "It is true." My answer is that he has evolved this out of his own head; no such incident happened. When he purported to dismiss me, or suspend me, I snapped my fingers at his declaration, saying, "Your suspension is worth only that." He knows very well that this is the case. I am able to add to my own account here a statement from some members of the family involved—others are away. You will see that they corroborate my account of these events.

"DEAR BRO. HEMERY,

"We have read Bro. Johnson's 'Harvest Siftings Reviewed,' and we want to say that we do not at all agree with Bro. Johnson in his statement of our relationship to him. He has not stated the matter fully, and what he says is calculated to leave a wrong impression. Listening to him at the time, we did think that he must be in the right, and for a time our sympathy was with him; but when the true situation dawned on us—partly through Bro. Johnson's strange conduct—we immediately broke from him. We were extremely

was not in the room when the commission resolved its findings. Why does Bro. Johnson not keep to the truth! Again, in the last words of the same long paragraph, there is an absolute untruth. He says Bro. McCloy advised me to write to Bro. Russell respecting Bros. Shearn and Crawford. There is no foundation for the statement.

Now on page eight comes another falsehood: I know no other term to use to describe these statements. Nearly at the foot of column one, Bro. Johnson says, "Bro. Hemery believed that he antityped Elijahshib and Hanani in Nehemiah; and that my credentials were referred to in Ezra 7: 11-26 and Neh. 2: 7." It is perhaps not to my credit as a Bible student to say that to this moment the names of Elijahshib and Hanani are but names to me. To say that I believed I antityped these men is to get about as far away from the truth as it is possible to get. Bro. Johnson was fixing everybody up out of the Book of Nehemiah, and small wonder if he had a place for me. He tried to get me to agree to his types. I told him that, while there might be similarities between Nehemiah and himself in characteristics and the constructive work that he *thought* he was called to do in this country, to say that he was the antitype of Ezra and Nehemiah was to put a mean or small interpretation upon a large type; that it could not be expected that the British affairs would be the antitype of the reconstruction of Jerusalem. At the table one morning he said, "And Bro. Hemery agrees with me in these things"—meaning the types. I immediately corrected him, and anyone then present would bear out this testimony.

On page eight, under the heading "Humiliation," Bro. Johnson tells of his sorrowful feeling for me. I should be better pleased if he would tell the truth. He made it necessary for me to take a course of action that was very painful. He says he took his humiliation humbly: certainly he did not. Had he done so, the cordial relationship which we had would, without doubt, have been continued to this day. All this trouble happened because he refused to take that which was quite evidently the Lord's providence for him—indeed, he fought against that providence.

It may be that Bro. Johnson was told that I am insolent to inferiors. I make bold to say that, during all the years that I have been privileged of the Lord to serve in any responsible position in the Harvest work, there is not one single instance which can be produced where it could be said that I had spoken one insolent word to those who Bro. Johnson

sorry that we had not seen that our course and his was a wrong one, and we expressed our regret to you as soon as we saw our mistake. We have no sympathy whatever with Bro. Johnson's course; our sympathy and our assistance are with you as representing Bro. Rutherford and the W.T.B. and T. Society, and we believe that you have fully understood this since those few sad days.

"We want to say to you that we have never known you to have the slightest insolent bearing to anyone in the house, no matter what position has been held. We have never been treated by you, nor known you to treat anyone who has worked here, in any other than a loving, brotherly manner, and it has always been a real pleasure for us to work with you. We did not see you show contempt for Bro. Johnson personally, nor sneer at him. The other members of the family join heartily in the latter part of this letter, and we all unite in a deep expression of love for you, and assure you of our loyal co-operation in the Lord's work.

" (Signed) W. H. DINGLE.

C. E. GUIVER.

H. DURRANT HEADLAND."

He knows, too, that when I advised Bro. Shearn not to remain in the office, it was because of Bro. Johnson's conduct, and because Bro. Shearn was fearful lest Bro. Johnson should lose further control of himself. The Bethel family did not side with Bro. Johnson, and those members of the family who did (with the exception of Bro. Housden, and Bro. and Sister Cormack, who said they were neutral) bitterly repented their action, and apologised, placing themselves unreservedly in the hands of the Society. They admitted that, for the time being, they had lost their judgment. They have worked harmoniously with us since. It is true that for nearly a week most of the members of the family took meals at the general table; but by the end of the week a request was made to me that another table for meals might be provided, for, said several, "we are so sick and tired of listening to Bro. Johnson's talk of himself, that we wish to be spared that pain." I agreed, and for nearly another week the majority ate their meals in the bookroom, leaving the usual dining table to Bro. Johnson and two or three others. Before he left he had only one declared follower—Bro. Housden. Again, on page nine, Bro. Johnson says that I complained frequently that he kept back work from me. I did nothing of the kind: he was a usurper, and was in rebellion. Was it likely that

I, as representing the President, would place myself subservient to him and ask him for work, and when at the same time I formally, by letter, advised the members of the Bethel family who were co-operating with him, that both they and Bro. Johnson were in rebellion?

Bro. Johnson says that I had an ambition to become the Pastor of the Tabernacle Congregation, and a desire to have no supervision over me in the office. The Lord knows that I never had any such ambition. Nor did I resist Bro. Johnson's claims until he was discredited, when it became my duty to do so. I am in the Lord's care, and I am seeking, in writing this, to do no more than that which seems necessary for the sake of the work. Those who know me know that Bro. Johnson's surmises have no foundation in fact. Bro. Johnson speaks about a debate with me, and of overcoming me in an argument. We never had an argument, much less a debate. There was nothing to argue about. The simple fact was that Bro. Johnson was recalled, and that he would not submit to authority. His trouble with me was because I would not argue or debate the question. That which he calls a debate was the most violent raging that I have ever been subjected to; it was most undignified behaviour on the part of a man who proclaimed himself to be the Lord's "Steward" and the Society's Plenipotentiary, and comparable only to the undignified exit from the Bethel upper window.

On page ten, under the heading "Injunction Suit," Bro. Johnson continually gets astray from the truth, and he shows a lamentable lack of understanding of the British situation in its financial matters. Many and many a time did I try to explain the relative situation of the W.T.B. and T. Soc., and I.B.S.A., and once and again did I tell him that I could not understand why he did not get the matter straightened out. His discovery of a "scheme" is really "a bee buzzing in his bonnet," as our Scotch friends say. Bro. Russell arranged for the British banking account to be under the care of himself and the British Managers (the W.T.B. and T. Soc. having no legal standing in this country). Since Bro. Russell was nearly always away, it meant that the care was really in the hands of the British Managers; and this has been so since the management was enlarged in 1911. Thus Bro. Johnson, in seeking to break down this arrangement, was to use his own argument, acting disloyally to Bro. Russell. All the matter which continues on page eleven, and occupies the whole page, is witness to the fact that Bro. Johnson did

had the power, and Bro. Johnson, in attempting to get this done, was doing exactly that which he blames both Bro. Shearn and Bro. Rutherford for trying to do—to break down Bro. Russell's arrangements. His statement that the I.B.S.A. is under a penalty of twenty-five dollars a day since March 21st is nonsense. Had he been more open to be taught he would have saved himself and us all this trouble and expense. Bro. Johnson's statement on page twelve, second column, that the Bank refused to deal with me as the Society's representative, and that Mr. Justice Sergeant ruled that his credentials gave him the right to control the Society's money, is directly untrue.

Why did Bro. Johnson want to take money out of the office safe, out of the building, and why did he take money which happened to be in the safe in our care, which did not belong to the Society—of which fact he was aware? Bro. Johnson, in his endeavour to tell the truth about the money which he and Bro. Housden took out of the office safe, again misses the mark. The donor of the cheque mentioned in his letter did not ask for its return because he knew of trouble; Bro. Johnson sent the cheque back asking for it to be made out in another name than mine that he might get hold of the money.

On page thirteen, second column, Bro. Johnson says I made points against him in the Tabernacle which repeatedly convulsed the Tabernacle congregation with laughter. You have, published in "Harvest Siftings," a verbatim report of my remarks, which were spoken and received seriously. I made no remarks other than those there reported.

Bro. Johnson's statement that he left Britain only as soon as he could safely return to America is ludicrous. He left when he saw his plans failed. His "control" over the British work ceased from the day he declared himself "Steward" (February 26th), though, as explained, he did for some days get control of the mails. The rebellion was broken on Tuesday morning, March 20th; he left the Bethel March 22nd; he sailed for New York on March 31st.

All this is painful writing. It seems pitiable that it should be necessary to take time over these things. In my opinion—an opinion shared by the responsible brethren in this country—Bro. Johnson's stay here would have been a calamity. He has an altogether wrong idea of the value of his visit. Our work here was at a low ebb, and now it is much brisker, as the report recently drawn out shows; but its liveliness was not unkindled by him, nor as a result of

not comprehend the simple things of the British office. This dangerous "scheme" or proposal, referred to at length, is simply this:—The Auditors to the Chartered I.B.S.A. required for Board of Trade purposes that books should be kept showing certain transactions of the I.B.S.A.; and in order to comply with the law they had drafted out, not at our request, but for their own purposes, and because they are partly responsible, proposals showing the moneys which should pass through the I.B.S.A. books. Bro. Johnson fancied that this was a scheme on the part of the British management to get some control which hitherto had not been possessed. The simple fact was that there was not a scrap of difference made. We here had full local control over the money; there was no control over us save that which is of love, the mutual bond of co-operation with the Head Office in the Lord's work. This was Bro. Russell's own arrangement: it pleased him; it seems to be the Lord's way. But Bro. Johnson views it as a dangerous way, and he wanted to alter the arrangements which Bro. Russell had made, and which the Lord had so long used without a bit of hurt to anyone. Where he mentions my name at the foot of page ten, and at the top of page eleven, he has the usual faculty of slipping away from the truth. I never sought his sanction to the proposals; I was not specially interested in them. The whole account is incorrect and untrue. Bro. Johnson thinks that, had Bro. Rutherford not "thrown him down," he would have won the suit at law. He never had a chance of winning it, for the Bank's answer to his injunction was upheld. It was ruled that the account was in the care of the persons in whose names it had been entered, and that no one else had any control. At the foot of page eleven Bro. Johnson tells how he consented to allow us £250 for running expenses. He allowed it in exactly the same sense as the poor man in the dentist's chair allows the dentist to extract the tooth when the forceps are in it. The Court gave us this carrying-on money at my request, and despite Bro. Johnson's opposition.

He shows his lack of understanding the situation when he says, in the same place, that he wanted to prevent any moneys being paid to the I.B.S.A. account. This there was no chance of his doing. Bro. Rutherford was quite well aware of the arrangements Bro. Russell had made. Bro. Johnson says Bro. Shearn refused to have the I.B.S.A. registered as a foreign control corporation. Of course Bro. Shearn could not do this, neither would he wish to do so even if he

his coming, except in an indirect way. I still believe he was used of the Lord to do a cleansing work. The Church in Britain was never in a healthier state than it is at the present time. It is loyal, and is showing its hearty appreciation of the present arrangement of the Society in Brooklyn and in London.

Much more could be said, but I wish to do no more than is necessary to show that Bro. Johnson does not give true accounts of words and actions—neither of his own nor of others. Bro. Rutherford may find it necessary to speak for himself. I for one do not accept Bro. Johnson's account of that which has happened in Brooklyn.

A copy of letter from Bro. Thackway follows :—

“ MY DEAR BROTHER HEMERY,

“ Loving Greetings in the Lord. I have just seen and perused ‘Harvest Siftings Reviewed,’ and hasten to assure you of my sympathy in the unwarranted and untruthful attacks made upon you by Bro. Johnson. I am fully confident that no weapon formed against you or the Society will prosper.

“ The statements made, in so far as I have knowledge of the British situation—and I was intimately in touch with it from the beginning of the trouble—are frequently inaccurate, and the elements of truth it contains are generally misapplied.

“ I observe that an extract is published from a letter sent by me to Bro. Johnson, and whatever influence my name may have is sought to justify his position. This is a very dishonest action. My letter was dated February 8th, long before Bro. Johnson claimed the ‘Stewardship’ and rebelled against the Society. I believed then, and still believe, that he was used to accomplish a cleansing work in the affairs of the London Tabernacle and British Office.

“ But shortly after his whole course changed, and my attitude towards him changed accordingly. On March 19th I wrote him from my changed viewpoint. I told him I was fully satisfied that he was misunderstanding you; that I could not possibly think he was in the right, and I urged him to act on the cabled instructions to return to America.

“ On Sunday, March 18th, I announced from the Pulpit that Bro. Johnson was in rebellion. I knew this from my personal conversation with him. The announcement was made by me at the request of the Committee of Elders and Deacons called in to assist you, and not by your request, though your

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consent was, of course, obtained. The words used were my own and faithfully represented my mind.

“ I send you my love in the Lord.

“ Yours in His service,

“ (Signed) H. C. THACKWAY.

“ December 7th, 1917.”

“ DEAR BRO. HEMERY,

“ I have received Bro. Johnson's pamphlet. He mentions my name twice, and quotes from a letter from me. The letter gives the impression that I was present at the Tabernacle on April 1st and reported to him that the remarks you made on that occasion several times convulsed the congregation with laughter. I was not present at that time, and there was nothing of such matter in my letter. Bro. Johnson has made a wrong use of the letter I wrote to him: I expressed my love as a brother, but condemned his methods.

“ I am,

“ Yours as ever,

“ (Signed) J. C. RADWELL.”

The Lord is taking care of His work.

LONDON, W.2.

34, CRAVEN TERRACE.

December 7th, 1917.