

Coworkers with the Truth

Key Verse: “We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.”
—III John 8

Selected Scripture:
III John

AS IN THE PRECEDING

epistle, the author referred to himself as “the elder” and is widely accepted to be the Apostle John. He addressed this letter to “wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.” (III John 1) Although Gaius appeared to be frail in his physical health, John

acknowledged his spiritual vitality, and rejoiced in the testimony he received from brethren that Gaius “walkest in the truth.” (vss. 2-4) John especially commended Gaius for the hospitality and utilization of his personal resources in helping to provide for the needs of servants engaged in the Gospel ministry.—vss. 5-7

The Apostle Paul also stressed a need for believers to live in accordance with the example of Christian conduct manifested by faithful brethren of the Early Church. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”—Phil. 4:8,9

Our Key Verse is an exhortation to us, as consecrated believers, to be alert to opportunities for providing whatever support we can lend towards other brethren who travel from place to place in promulgating God's Word. Such assistance may include entertaining such servants in our homes, and in some instances, as appropriate, it may involve rendering financial aid. In all cases, however, we have the privilege of supporting those able to be more actively engaged in the ministry through our prayers on their behalf, and by words of encouragement.

John continues, saying, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."—III John 9-11

In contrast to faithful Gaius, it was needful for John to issue a public rebuke to Diotrephes, who manifested pride and a dictatorial spirit, even to the point of using his influence to prevent others from showing hospitality to John and other faithful laborers in God's service. As a conclusion to this epistle, John, by contrast, cites Demetrius as a trustworthy brother to Gaius, one whose Christian conduct stood approved.—vs. 12

A similar lesson to that of this epistle was also penned by the Apostle John, not only for those who lived in his day, but also for all consecrated followers of Christ throughout the entire Gospel Age. These words, given to John by the risen Lord, state: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10 ■