

VOL. XXXVII. JANUARY 1 NO. 1
A. D. 1916--A. M. 6044

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PUBLISHED BY
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
CHARLES T. RUSSELL, PRESIDENT
"BROOKLYN TABERNACLE," 13-17 HICKS ST.,
BROOKLYN, N. Y., U. S. A.

Foreign Agencies:-British Branch: LONDON TABERNACLE
Lancaster Gate, London, W. German Branch: Unterdorner Str., 76,
Barmen. Australasian Branch: Flinders Building, Flinders St., Melbourne.
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BETHEL HYMNS FOR FEBRUARY

After the close of the hymn the Bethel family listens to the reading of "My Vow Unto the Lord," then joins in prayer. At the breakfast table the MANNA text is considered. Hymns for February follow: (1) 114; (2) 221; (3) 4; (4) 300; (5) 67; (6) 91; (7) 324; (8) 155; (9) 95; (10) 12; (11) 27; (12) 273; (13) 50; (14) 32; (15) 145; (16) 240; (17) 307; (18) 258; (19) 18; (20) 194; (21) 281; (22) 296; (23) 7; (24) 44; (25) 130; (26) 176; (27) 108; (28) 170; (29) 3.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

NATURALLY enough, one influence of the great European war is to turn the minds of some toward religion and the consideration of a future life. The fact that sons, brothers and husbands are in danger or wounded or dead or prisoners in a foreign

land--all of them beyond human protection
--naturally turns the minds of many toward
the Almighty Creator. Hence reports from
the warring nations indicate an increase of
religious sentiment--larger church attendance, more
people praying, etc.

To the extent that such religious activities are inspired
merely by fear and helplessness, they of course amount
to very little, for the public, mistaught, know not that
there is no access to the Divine ear, no authority for
prayer, no ground for claiming protection for loved ones,
except through the great Advocate whom God has appointed.
Neither do they understand that He is not the
world's Advocate, but merely the Church's; and that no
one is a member of the Church who has not, through
knowledge of the Lord, through repentance, made a full
consecration of himself to do the Lord's will. Hence,
those not Scripturally informed--and they include the
vast majority of all denominations of Christians--cry
aloud to the Lord in their troubles; but in the absence
of trouble or danger are worshipers at the shrines of
pleasure, of wealth, of selfishness, of lust, or of appetite.

We cannot hope that this class will receive any permanent
benefit at the present time--any more than would
the heathen. It will be a little later on in this great
Trouble, in the revolution and anarchy which the Lord
indicates will follow each other, that they will begin
really to wake up and to realize that unless those days
be shortened, no flesh would survive. (^Matthew 24:22`.)
Then they will begin to seek the Lord, not merely in a
form of godliness, but with truly broken hearts.

JEHOVAH CHASTENING THE WORLD

The Lord's provision will then opportunely come to
them. The Redeemer, through whose blood of the New
Covenant there is to be a full atonement made, will then
take to Himself His great power and reign as the Mediator
of that New Covenant; and the glorious Millennium
will be fully established. Under its beneficent arrangement
the darkness of the present civilization and the
gross darkness of the heathen will disappear before the
rising Sun of Righteousness with healing in His beams.

Then the Lord, who is now speaking to them in His
anger, chastening in His sore displeasure, and revealing
Himself in the flaming fire of the near future, will be
ready to speak to their chastened hearts words of comfort,
of mercy, which because of ignorance and superstition
and misconception they are not able and willing
to receive now. The Lord will turn unto His people the
pure Message, that they may all call upon the name of
the Lord to serve Him with one consent. (^Zephaniah 3:9`.)
Thus "the light of the knowledge of the glory of
God will fill the whole earth"--ocean deep! (^Habakkuk 2:14`.)
As a result of the heart-breaking experiences,
followed by the greater knowledge, all knees will be

bowing and all tongues will be confessing to the glory of God. And those refusing to come into harmony with that supreme and glorious Reign of Righteousness, we are told, will be sure to be destroyed from amongst the people.--`Acts 3:23`.

There is, however, another class of religious people, who undoubtedly are being influenced much more deeply, intelligently and profitably--true Christians, who in the past have been lulled to sleep, or who as babes in Christ have not been thoroughly nourished with the Word of Truth. These are now having their senses exercised as never before, and every day are getting more awake and inquiring what these things mean--things so different from what they have been taught and what they had expected. Already they are asking, "Where is the hope we had of the conversion of the heathen to the glorious standards of our Christianity?" They are inquiring, "Has there not been some mistake made when we called these kingdoms of Europe kingdoms of God and kingdoms of Christ--Christendom?" They are awakening to the fact that we have long been under a great delusion--that these kingdoms are merely kingdoms of this world; that the Prince of this world is still the ruler; that Messiah, the Prince of Light, is only now, and through this great tribulation, taking to Himself His great power to begin His Reign of Righteousness.

It requires a little time for all this to germinate in the hearts of those who have been so seriously misinformed by the ministers and teachers whom they trusted. At first apathy, a feeling of doubt on every subject, comes into the minds of these people, but as they go to the Lord in prayer from earnest, consecrated hearts they are guided, enlightened. They find indeed that the faith they built was largely "wood, hay and stubble" material--human traditions, theories and creeds. The burning, or destruction, of these leaves them, however, that much better prepared for the erection of a better faith-structure of the gold, silver and precious stones of Divine promises.

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The burning of their "wood, hay and stubble" structure of errors, having been built upon "the Rock Christ Jesus," themselves "shall be saved so as by fire."--`1 Corinthians 3:15`.

JEHOVAH'S ACT--HIS STRANGE ACT

Note the difference between this class and the one first mentioned, who have never really been consecrated to the Lord, but who are merely nominal Christians, children of error and typical "tares." The burning of their false faith will leave them nothing; for they never were properly on "the Rock Christ Jesus." It will reduce them merely to the level of the world, of which they have always been a part; but, misled by wrong teachings, they

thought themselves Christians. And by many they were mistaken for Christians, even as tares may be mistaken for true wheat.

It is this extraordinary effect of this Day of Wrath upon the world in general, and especially upon professed Christians, which the Lord evidently refers to through the Prophet Isaiah: "The Lord...shall be wroth, bring to pass His act, His strange act." (Isaiah 28:21`.) It will surely be a strange procedure on God's part, as viewed by those not taught of the Lord, when they shall see all the religious systems of the present time go down and the world heading straight for chaos.

The cry of the people at that time will much resemble the cry of the Apostles, when on the Lake of Galilee the great storm arose. They came to Jesus in the hinder part of the boat, apparently asleep, crying, "Master, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" Immediately, when they have learned their dependence upon the Lord-- which many do not now very fully appreciate--immediately when they cry to the Lord from the depth of their hearts in astonishment and fear, He will be ready to answer them graciously and to deliver them.

Man's extremity will be God's opportunity! As Jesus arose, He rebuked the winds and the waves; and immediately there was a great calm on the Lake of Galilee. So in the midst of the awful trouble and human perplexity--

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"men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after the things coming"--Messiah's Kingdom, "the desire of all nations," will take control of the situation; and immediately the storm of human passion and anarchy will cease. Then men will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more."--`Isaiah 2:4` ; `Micah 4:3`.

GLORIOUS OPPORTUNITIES AT HAND

Manifestly now, and increasingly so as the days go by, the minds of thinking people will be opening to a realization of the Truth. Now, as never before, they will need the Lord's saints to point them in the right direction --to bring the Scriptures to their attention and the various helps for Bible study which the Lord has been graciously providing, and which are already in the hands of many. As society and religious systems will be reeling as a drunken man, as the Bible explains, these undeveloped saints of God will need the very help we by God's grace are enabled to render them. Surely there never was so favorable a time as the present for rendering assistance to this class! More and more, as these find that they have been misled by the shepherds of the nominal systems, they will be as sheep without a shepherd.

To those who have the knowledge of God, of His

Word, of His Plan, the present and the near future offer certainly the most wonderful opportunities of which we could conceive. Whoever loves the Lord will love the brethren. Whoever would serve the Lord will be intent upon serving the brethren; and the more their need, the better the opportunity; and the greater our zeal, the greater the results for others, and the greater the blessing for ourselves. "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."--`John 4:36`.

It will be seen from this that, so far from thinking our work ended, we have wonderful expectations in respect to the year 1916.

SMITING OF JORDAN BY ELIJAH

We have already called attention, in *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, Vol. II., to the fact that Elijah, the Prophet, typified The Christ--Jesus the Head and the Church His Body--in their fleshly experiences; and that the taking up of Elijah into heaven, typically represents the final passing of the Church from the earthly conditions to the Heavenly. We have seen, too, that when Elijah's time for translation came, he was sent from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho and from Jericho to Jordan; and that these different points were measurably disappointing; yet that Elijah and Elisha were not discouraged, but went on--Jordan representing the end of the Times of the Gentiles, 1915. As Jordan was the last point to which Elijah was directed, so 1915 is the last point to which the Church has been directed. As Elijah went on, not knowing any further place, so the true Church is going on without any definite time-point before it.

Soon the chariot of fire will separate the Elijah class from the Elisha class. The fiery chariot seems to mean severe trials or persecutions. A little later, the Elijah class will be taken up in the whirlwind. Elsewhere in the Bible a whirlwind is apparently used to symbolize the great time of anarchy. The lesson possibly is that the Lord's faithful of the Elijah class will be amongst the first in civilized lands to suffer some kind of violence through lawlessness and anarchy.

We know not how soon this culmination may come, nor need we be concerned, since it is our Lord who is at the helm, and since we are expecting that He will require each one to be "faithful unto death." The thing which especially concerns us now is another part of the type: When Elijah and Elisha reached the bank of Jordan, Elijah took his mantle and, folding it together, smote the waters of the river; and they divided, and the two crossed dry-shod. What does this mean? What experiences are typified thereby? Apparently it refers to something in the immediate future--something which seemingly should be beginning at once.

We may not be too sure of what is meant by this feature of the type. We are to remember, on the contrary, that Bible prophecies are rarely understood much

in advance of their fulfilment. This was so at the Lord's First Advent. Prophecies were fulfilling on every hand, yet the disciples did not perceive them until later--as our Lord's death and resurrection. After His resurrection, He explained to His disciples many of the things; and we read that "then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." (Luke 24:45.) It may be so here. We may witness a fulfilment of this feature, and not discern its application until completed.

Our conjecture respecting the meaning of this picture is this: Elijah's mantle represented Divine Power operating through him; and similarly God's Power operating through His Elect now. In Bible symbology, water stands for Truth and also for people; and we see no reason to object to its standing for both of these in this picture--a division of the people through the proper and right dividing of the Truth. Jordan also signifies trial, test or

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judgment. Taking these three things in combination, we have a forceful figure. If the interpretation proves to be a correct one, it will mean something like this: that God somehow will exercise through His enlightened people a power which will have an effect of causing a division amongst the people in respect to the Truth, and which will be a test upon them in this dividing.

Not knowing what will be the opportunities, nor what the method of exercising those opportunities, we must wait for the Lord and the leadings of His providences. But meantime, surely it is for the Elijah class to be thoroughly alert and actively interested, ready, watching, waiting for the Master's guidance!

With these things before us, we urge all the Lord's consecrated people who have a knowledge of these things to "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:13.) We urge them not to become entangled in worldly matters, but to keep themselves in the love of God and in the service of God, the Truth, the brethren.

We remember that after our Lord's crucifixion, many of His disciples were inclined to go back into the fishing business--a very natural course. We remember how the Lord gave them evidences, however, that His blessings could be with them, and they could continue to be "fishers of men"; and that all success depended upon Him; and that without Him they could do nothing. This lesson was deeply impressed upon those who first started in the fishing business. They toiled all night, but caught nothing, and in the morning saw Jesus on the shore with fish already cooked. Apparently they never forgot that lesson.--John 21:1-10.

Deeply interested in all of the Lord's dear brethren, we have felt a sort of solicitude for them as we have noticed how some who have been zealous for the

Colporteur work under much less favorable conditions than the present and the future are going into worldly business. We have probably one hundred less Colporteurs today than we had a year ago, although the financial conditions everywhere show that rather we should have twice as many Colporteurs today. It is not for us to complain--we are not complaining. We are merely calling attention in this general way, rather than in a private or personal way, to the fact that the love of some may be growing cool, and that they may thus endanger their gaining "a full reward."

We may not know what power the Lord may put into our hands for causing a great division of the people in respect to the Truth. It may be a financial power, that was represented by Elijah's mantle in this case, or it may be something else. We are waiting to see. Meanwhile we are endeavoring to keep all the branches in all lines of the work well in hand, so as to be ready to smite when the opportune moment shall come. We trust that this is the spirit of all the Lord's dear people who are awaiting the Kingdom--a spirit of alertness, a spirit of zeal, and of energy, and of a sound mind--counting the things of this present time as "not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."--`Acts 20:24`; `Philippians 3:8`; `Romans 8:18`.

One of our arrangements for the near future is to set aside some of the Pilgrim brethren who have special ability for addressing the public, that they may give their time constantly in this direction, or to whatever extent the Lord may open the way--going from place to place in longer journeys to serve those classes which will indicate to THE WATCH TOWER Office their ability and desire to have public meetings in some of the best Auditoriums in each case. This will not interfere with other classes and their being served by other brethren--some of those brethren who have no special talent for public speaking, but who have exceptional ability for semi-public meetings and for parlor meetings, where they would be addressing chiefly the Household of Faith, versed in Present Truth.

We remind all who have opportunity, or who can make opportunity for engaging in the Colporteur work, that there are millions of homes still not supplied with the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and many more millions which have not been blessed with the CREATION SCENARIO and the DAILY HEAVENLY MANNA. Here are fields of usefulness which must be gone over surely before we may hope to be taken in the whirlwind. Let us be alive to our privileges, our opportunities, that there may be no faintheartedness, but a zeal for God and His Message and for the brethren who need our help--yea, and for some who have a hearing ear and some who have been coming rapidly into the Truth within the last few months. With these things in mind, we have selected as our year's text for 1916 the following:

"STRONG IN FAITH"--`ROMANS 4:20`

We have provided these in a cheap form that all who desire may have them. We can send two of the cards for five cents, postpaid, or any larger number at a proportionate rate.

MILITARISM AND NAVALISM--HOW LONG?

We own to a trepidation when writing on this subject. Our friends on both sides of the conflict, naturally enough, feel touchy. We have had three letters from Germans, claiming that we are prejudiced and do not give them justice. We have had four letters from our British friends, making similar complaint. We believe, however, that the majority of our friends on both sides do understand us; and we assume that the seven letters came from persons comparatively new in the Truth. Those familiar with our position need not to be told that we have no sympathy whatever with the German invasion of Belgian territory, even though they claim that Belgium was under-handedly associated with the Allies. We have no sympathy with acts of violence and murder in Belgium or elsewhere. We have no sympathy with the destruction of non-combatants and commercial vessels by submarines, even though the vessels did carry munitions of war. We have no sympathy with the dropping of bombs from the sky, either in London or Paris or in German and Austrian cities. We have no sympathy with the war at all.

However, on the other hand, regarding the nations as not Christian, we are not surprised that they should be engaged in an immoral warfare. We are not surprised that under stress of apparent necessity for victory, all the nations engaged in this war are trampling upon the laws of nations, to which they all agreed. We can no more excuse the British, French, Russians and Italians for such violation of the rights of others than we can excuse the Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Bulgars and Turks. We see wrongs perpetrated in every direction; Divine Laws entirely set aside by these so-called Christian nations--Christendom.

Surely it is not in vain that the Scriptures say, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him"! (`Romans 12:20`.) And when professed British Christians break and violate the Master's instructions, and try to starve the professed

German Christians, we are not surprised that the latter retaliate in every way that they can--whether by Zeppelin raids or submarine raids or otherwise. These nations, from our viewpoint being unchristian nations, could have no higher motto than is expressed in the sentiment, "Necessity

knows no law." The Germans decided that if the British starved their wives and babies and aged non-combatants, they would be right to retaliate by destroying everything British that they could reach, including non-combatant passengers on steamers.

We see that it would have been wiser for the British to have kept the law of nations, and to have held to the instruction of Jesus; and yet, realizing that we are still under the dominion of the Prince of this world, Satan, and that he, as the god of this world, is still working in the hearts of the children of disobedience, nothing that they could do would much surprise us. Do we not know from the Scriptures that the heart of man is exceedingly sinful; that his anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, bitterness, are works of the flesh and of the Devil; and that these are being manifest on every hand, notwithstanding the number of churches, preachers, etc.?

St. Peter wrote of the followers of Jesus--the consecrated Church: "Ye are a Royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people [a people for a purpose, Diaglott], that ye should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9.) This New Nation--God's nation--is in the world, but not of it. Its members cannot be loyal to the prince of this world, and to the Prince of Glory, both. They must choose between the two. This will make them "peculiar" in the eyes of the majority of people, who do not understand the matter, but who believe the kingdoms of this world to be kingdoms of Christ--even though they be perplexed as to why one kingdom of Christ should seek to blow the other off the land and off the sea.

All of the nations realize that they are impoverishing themselves of their best blood and virility and of their wealth--placing the grievous burden of debt upon generations yet unborn--unless their debts should be repudiated, which would mean revolution and anarchy, such as the Bible seems to foretell. No wonder there is a movement for peace in all these countries. It is a sad spectacle. How strange it must appear to them as well as to ourselves! The greatest nations are bleeding to death, severely wounded. More than twenty millions of men are now under arms and expense and are non-producers, besides the terrible loss already sustained through the wounds and death of nine millions.

But will the nations be wise enough even now to turn from war? Their admirable courage and their inestimable pride seem to answer, Nay! And this seems to be in full accord with Bible prophecy. As we have pointed out for twenty-five years past, the war is to continue until more and more will be involved, and all the participants be weakened and made ready for the great earthquake of social revolution and the fire of anarchy which will follow that with horrible desolation. Verily, the Scriptures correctly declare, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18.) From history we may judge that the world aforesaid was no

less viciously intentioned, but that God's providence interfered, as though He said, "Thus far shalt thou come, but no further." (Job 38:11`.) Now, however, we have apparently reached the time when the Lord is saying, "Let loose the winds of strife!" These winds are blowing more and more, and eventually are to become a great whirlwind of trouble, as pictured in the Scriptures.

The possibilities of conflict are extending over to Persia, and thence down toward India. While all the nations will be glad to have peace, each is afraid to show a white feather for fear of the loss of prestige. The Spirit of the Lord is not anywhere manifest, nor should we expect it, for the time has come for all to realize that these great nations are not Christian nations, but merely kingdoms of this world and under the Prince of this world, who now "worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience" to anger, wrath, hatred, envy, strife, bitterness. The primary element of the Lord's Spirit is humility: "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter 5:6`.) This spirit the world does not recognize as its standard; and hence we do not see the Spirit of Christ, explained by the Apostle--"meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly-kindness, love."--Galatians 5:22, 23`.

Indeed, we entreat all the Lord's dear people to remember that there are but the two great Masters; and that we have enlisted on the side of our God and His Christ, and are to prove loyal to these in the midst of a crooked and perverse people, blinded by the god of this world and filled with his spirit of pride, boastfulness, animosity, hatred and strife. It should be our desire to be neutral as between these contending factions of Satan's empire. We love them all; we wish for them all great blessings. We have a Message of hope for all who have ears to hear that eventually their extremity will be God's opportunity; and that Messiah's Kingdom will roll away the curse, and instead roll on to mankind the blessings of the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

Let us never forget our neutrality. Let us be just toward all, kind, generous. Let us avoid as far as possible any discussion of these matters with those who would not be able to understand and appreciate our position. Otherwise, we would be doing what the Master admonished us not to do, when He said, "Cast not your pearls before swine; lest they trample them under foot and turn again and rend you." (Matthew 7:6`.) Our worldly neighbors have not the viewpoint that we possess, and cannot understand our arguments or reasons. In due time they will understand. Now the Lord's consecrated people should be unobtrusive, not strife-breeders, not partisans, not bigoted, but wonderfully sympathetic toward all, realizing the true situation, as others are not able to do.

As the facts gradually leak out, it is noticeable that none of the nations at war possess all the virtues and none of them possess all the vices. As between the opposing forces in this great war, the dishonors are probably

not unequally matched. While everybody noted the great injustice done to the Belgians in the German invasion, the very ones who were loudest in rebuking that injustice have been guilty of a similar invasion of a weak state-- the invasion of Greece by the British and French, who crossed her territory to assist the Servians. And whatever may have been the atrocities of the Turks against the Armenians, whom the Turks claim were arming and entrenching against them, nothing could have exceeded the bestial ferocity of the Russians against the Jews, who, so far as we know, were seeking to be neutral.

THE JEWS AS WAR SUFFERERS

While people of all nations are suffering directly or indirectly from the present great war, the poor Jew seems to get the worst of it everywhere. He is to be found in all the different armies--sometimes as a volunteer, sometimes as a conscript. It appears that in Galicia, where the Jews are very numerous and where they are very thoroughly hated by the Russians and Cossacks, they

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have suffered tremendously--and are still suffering. The fortunes of war swept them from one side and then from the other--back and forth. Surely these poor people, of all the people of earth, will soon begin to pray, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven"!

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We give below an extract from the Maccabean, a Jewish journal published in New York City. It gives a little glimpse of the sufferings of the war-swept region-- a glimpse which should horrify the most hardened. Surely the Lord is preparing the world to acclaim Messiah's Kingdom "the desire of all nations"! (Haggai 2:7.) The excerpt which follows gives the testimony of one of the distressed, a Rumanian Jew of Bukowina:

"Day before yesterday, early in the morning, the Cossacks fired my house until it burned like tinder. When they came to us into the mountains as victors, the sacking of houses was common enough. They simply took whatever they could lay hands on. But we didn't drain the full measure of evil until they returned beaten and in retreat. It was then that they overran us in hordes, drunk with rage. They demanded provender in a hurry, hay and oats for their horses, and food for themselves. First came the order to fire the house of the town judge. Then they dragged the Jewish inn-keeper into the street to dispatch him. One of the horsemen speared him with his lance, another finished him by shooting him through the head. Then the villagers came in a mass and begged to have their houses protected against looting. They were speared by the soldiers and knocked down. It was

terrible. And with the inn-keeper slain, brandy was flowing freely from casks in an ownerless inn. The soldiers drank themselves into a state of furious madness, and then went into the houses to gratify their bestial lusts. To me they came as they did to the others--I don't know to how many houses in all. They outraged my wife in plain view of the children, and violated my little girl. They bound me with ropes and threw me under a bench, so that I might witness my shame without power of interfering; that I might be poisoned and not die; that I might live the most miserable of mankind. At last they fired our house. The women ran about distracted, wherever their feet would carry them. And when the conflagration ceased, when we saw our life's work laid in ashes, we went through a snowstorm into the wide world."

"Multiply this experience with ten thousand, and scatter these ten thousand instances of Cossack rule over the whole of Galicia and Bukowina, and you will have a picture--a very imperfect one--of what these two provinces, and particularly its Jewish population, had to suffer under the sway of the Russian invasion.

"In Jablowitza, Bukowina, a house was fired by the soldiers who strictly prohibited any salvage. Not to freeze to death during a cold night, the unfortunate owner, a Jew, took two blankets from out of the burning house. He was crucified by the soldiers, and a guard posted below the crucifix until he expired. In Fuczka several Jews were hanged, one of them because he wanted to save his wife from violation. In Storozynetz, south of Czernowitz, Isaak Feller Mayer, a Jew, was dragged out of bed in the dead of night, by four soldiers, who, without stating any reasons, attempted to hang him. The rope broke and the soldiers cut his throat, gouged out his eyes, and threw the naked corpse into the snow.

"The Russians in Galicia reintroduced into modern warfare the Tartar bestiality of using helpless human beings as a cover in marching against the enemy. To be sure, these human beings were Jews. Not prisoners, mind you, but non-combatants, not men only, but old men, young men, women and children of both sexes. It was at Nadworna where the unnamable, the indescribable portent took place. The Russians huddled together one thousand five hundred Jewish families--octogenarians, old women, young matrons with infants at their breasts, school children, pell-mell, some seven thousand souls in all, and drove them as a human cover against the Austrian battlefield, marching right in the track of their victims. There are no words in any language emphatic enough to characterize such an exploit.

"Try and depict, if you can, the situation--strive to bring the unthinkable close to your imagination! Fifteen hundred families, seven thousand heads, none of them able to bear arms, all the capable having been mobilized long ago, a huge swarm of the old, the sick, of women and children. These Jews, incapable of bearing arms, had been tortured for months by all the miseries of war;

they had suffered hunger and cold, the Russians had looted their dwellings, burned their houses, destroyed their property; they had robbed, scourged and tormented them. And now they were lashed to the shambles like oxen--forward! pashol! They are fired at from the rear with revolvers and machine-guns, their backs are scourged with the knout, their loins are pierced with Cossack lances and their skulls battered by the butts of Cossack carbines, and thus they are driven against three hundred volcanoes, roaring and belching fire all along the Austrian front. The Austrians hear the tremendous outcry of the victims, the groaning of the mutilated and the dying, but they cannot help their misery; they must keep on firing ceaselessly, for behind this human holocaust the enemy is crouching for a spring; if they cease firing, the Russians will be upon them and the battle lost. And in this manner seven thousand souls, men, women and children, are slaughtered on the battle-line between two contending armed forces, unarmed themselves and perishing without a fighting chance in a Tartar welter of execution en masse."

"A TOKEN OF MY COVENANT"

What shall I render unto Thee?
What praise sufficient could there be
For all Thy benefits toward me,
O Thou Most High?

I'll drink Salvation's cup today
Which Thou hast poured. Be Thou my stay!
Assist me as Thy saint to pay
My Vows to Thee.

Remembering Thy Heavenly call,
I'll strive to be sincere to all.
I pray for grace lest I should fall
From simple Truth.

In thought, in word, in all my ways
Thy holy standard I would raise,
Nor please, nor honor self, but praise
My Worthy King.

Today in matters small or great,
I'll serve with faithfulness and wait
For further joys. Oh, blessed state,
Thus serving Thee!

I'll strive to "choose things that excel;"
All anxious care I'll seek to quell,
And all discouragements repel,
And be content.

I'll neither murmur nor repine!
I'll trust my heart to care Divine
To make of it a sacred shrine
Where Thou canst dwell.

VIRGINIA NOBLE STEPHENSON.

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1915--FOREIGN BRANCH REPORTS--1915

REPORT OF BRITISH BRANCH

Dear Brother Russell:--

It is our pleasure and privilege to send you another Annual Report of the British Harvest work. We are very thankful to the Lord for the continued opportunities of service during a time of uncertainty and of the world's strife. The accompanying figures show that the war has not shut the work down, though it has interfered with its progress. On a broad summary it may be said that our output of books and tracts for the year is about two-thirds of that of last year, and not much less than that of the year 1913. During the current year we have circulated in Britain 90,700 of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, and 64,300 books and booklets (SCENARIOS, MANNAS, and the pamphlets, TABERNACLE SHADOWS, Hell, etc.). The free distribution of Volunteer matter, free SCENARIOS and B. S. M. amounts to nearly eleven million copies.

COLPORTEUR WORK STIMULATED BY DRAMA

The Colporteur work has been greatly aided by the PHOTO-DRAMA. Indeed had it not been for the DRAMA the output of books would, to all appearances, have been very much less. The regular Colporteur work lost some of its most successful workers soon after the outbreak of the war, when the first pinch of money was felt. We cannot but feel sorry for this, for the country recovered from its panic when the demand for war material began to be felt, and since then there has been plenty of money in circulation, and the people are perishing for need of the Truth. We still think there is plenty of room for good Colporteurs, and it is still true that ground already gone over can again be canvassed to advantage.

The Volunteer work has gone on well. Of the various issues provided for this privilege of service, the friends have distributed about seven and a half million copies. There is, however, a drop in the numbers of B. S. M.; for the Class-extension work was almost discontinued after the war began and after the advent of the DRAMA. There are some indications of the work reviving.

There have been 207 exhibitions of the PHOTO-DRAMA, and the recorded attendance is 593,659, and there have

been signed cards at the Finales to the number of 26,860.

The number of Associated Bible Classes has greatly increased during the year and appreciation of the Truth is being maintained in them. The younger brethren show keen interest in the glorious Hope and are making advancement in knowledge and piety, whilst those more advanced are remaining steadfast in the faith and are rejoicing continually. All the classes are receiving Pilgrim visits as regularly as the circumstances permit.

Many newspapers continue to publish the sermons, and the message continues to do a good work, as is seen by many evidences.

The office work continues brisk, as the above figures will show. The letters in and out for the year total 53,995. There are prospects of work for some time to come before us, and we continue to serve and wait.

Ever praying the Lord's blessing for yourself, we are,
dear brother,

Your servants in the Lord,
MANAGERS OF BRITISH BRANCH.

BRITISH BRANCH ACTIVITIES FOR 1915 SUMMARIZED

Volumes of SCRIPTURE STUDIES..... 98,410
MANNAS, SCENARIOS, etc..... 64,305
Free literature, B. S. M., etc.....10,784,871
Letters received and sent out..... 53,995

REPORT OF AUSTRALASIAN BRANCH

Dear Brother Russell:--

It is with gladness that we can again report a year of progress; in fact, it is the best year yet, and much better than could have been expected in many ways. The circumstances of the year have, of course, been exceptional all over the world; but besides the dislocation of trade and unusual conditions through the war, there was the

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severe drought to contend with. Thousands of cattle and sheep were lost, or sold to be slaughtered and put in the refrigerators; thus the price of meat was kept up. Expensive horses were simply given away to save them from starvation. Foodstuffs for cattle brought enormous prices, and of course provisions went to great prices; for instance, butter reached 60 cents a pound. There was lack of employment, and hard times seemed upon us. The war, however, has kept certain trades busy, such as clothing, munitions, etc. At the same time the war has taken many men out of the country; their wives and dependents being provided for, so much distress has been averted. Counteracting the scarcity of money and uncertainty of

things, the Colporteurs have found that these strenuous times (this terrible war and universal trouble which so clearly mark the ending of the "Present Evil World" and the inauguration of "the World to come wherein dwelleth Righteousness") have made people begin to consider and inquire as to the Divine Purpose. Had not some of our best Colporteurs been taken from their work to help the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION for a time, many more volumes would have been placed.

ALWAYS OPPORTUNITIES IF WE WATCH

We still have a noble band of Colporteurs, and the work goes well, even over ground which had been covered several times before. While some have seemed to slacken in their zeal, as though they had made up their minds that the work ought to stop now, because they had expected it would, others take the wiser view, namely, that it will be time to stop when we cannot go on. No doubt the Lord can and will stop the work in His own due time; but even if the general Harvest work should stop, it would seem that the Lord will never leave His people with nothing to do. Surely there will always be some opportunities of service if we watch for them! When the Harvest ends, it will soon be time to "turn the pure language [message] to the people," whoever may be here to do it.--`Zephaniah 3:9`.

"So on we go not knowing,
We would not if we might;
We'd rather walk in the dark with God,
Than go alone in the light."

PHOTO-DRAMA: In Australia there have been about 286 exhibitions, with a total attendance of about 295,000. In New Zealand 63 exhibitions with attendance of about 50,100. In Fiji, 25 with an attendance of 6,800.

These figures may seem small to you as compared with the U.S.A. and England, but our conditions are so different. Our territory is larger than the U. S. A., and yet the population of Australia is only about five millions, a little more than the population of Greater New York.

The one DRAMA operating in Australia has traveled some 5,000 miles to visit from Queensland to West Australia. Good work has been done, and while it is surprising how many can see it without seeming lasting good, yet there are some in every State now rejoicing in the Truth and giving evidences of thorough consecration as a result of this work.

The friends everywhere have contributed to this feature of the work generously, and what is included in the statement does not take into account several hundred

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pounds which have been spent in this connection by the

Classes. The Perth Class ultimately paid all the expenses of producing the DRAMA for West Australia; the Adelaide friends did the same for South Australia, and New Zealand practically did the same for that country. The other classes also did remarkably well according to ability.

PATIENTLY WAITING FOR THE LORD

Notwithstanding all the extra expense of the DRAMA, the contributions to the general Tract Fund and Good Hopes have been maintained; thus you will be pleased to see how much in earnest the Australasian brethren are.

There has been considerable growth in grace as well as in numbers. While possibly one or two here or there may seem to have slackened in interest, because they expected to have been with the Lord by this time, it is beautiful to see in others the opposite effect, the mellowing of character, the submission to and patient waiting for the Lord, willing to serve Him either here or there, this or the other side of the veil, simply biding His time.

There has been more than usual response to the general distribution of the papers, throughout the year, but if as you intimate, we are to make this Branch self-supporting in future, we may have to curtail our expense in this direction. However, it is good to realize that the Lord is overruling the work, and is able to provide what is necessary to the accomplishment of His will, and we desire to do no more than pleases Him.

We desire a continuation of your prayers and the prayers of all the Lord's people, that we may have wisdom and Divine guidance as we seek to continue the work to the Lord's glory and to the assistance of the Body waiting for the Deliverance.--`Romans 8:23`.

With Christian love to yourself and all coworkers,
Yours in the Service of Christ,

AUSTRALASIAN BRANCH.

P. S.--WATCH TOWER subscribers number 1,150. B.S.M. subscribers number 1,350.

Many of the latter subscribe for hundreds and some for thousands of copies monthly.

PHOTO-DRAMA is now having a splendid run at Sydney.

SUMMARY OF AUSTRALASIAN WORK

| | |
|--|-----------|
| STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES (cloth)..... | 37,419 |
| " " " (paper)..... | 3,026 |
| Booklets..... | 3,517 |
| ----- | |
| Total..... | 43,962 |
| PEOPLE'S PULPIT (B. S. M.), free..... | 1,192,930 |
| WATCH TOWER..... | 6,411 |
| ----- | |
| Total..... | 1,199,341 |
| Letters received..... | 4,388 |
| Letters sent out..... | 5,315 |

EXPENDITURES

Deficiency to Brooklyn to October, 1914..œ1482:11: 2
Cost of Free Literature..... 337: 2:11
Postage on same..... 39:12: 9
Freight, postage, etc..... 70:18: 1
General Expense: Gas, Rent, etc..... 43:15: 0
Pilgrim and extension work..... 92: 9: 4
PHOTO-DRAMA Operations..... 876: 3: 7

œ2942:12:10

RECEIPTS

Donations received:

Tract Fund..... œ560: 3: 2
Special for PHOTO-DRAMA..... 422:15: 5
Deficit due to Brooklyn..... 1959:14: 3

œ2942:12:10

SWEDISH BRANCH REPORT

Dear Brother Russell:--

As the season for our yearly balancing of accounts has come round again, and we--contrary to earlier expectations of many in our ranks--still are human beings, and still, while in this "weak" condition, have the blessed privilege to partake in the service of the Truth and in the wonderful joys and sufferings connected with that service, I have herewith the great pleasure of sending you some statements from the work accomplished through the Society's Swedish branch during the last year.

Looking around us in this part today, we cannot but feel very, very humble and thankful indeed, seeing how merciful and good the dear Heavenly Father has been toward His people in this country, amongst whom we have the greatly appreciated privilege to serve as a representative of yourself--His chosen and faithful servant.

The fact is, that in spite of the many hindrances and difficulties (financially and otherwise) directly and indirectly caused by the present European war, the Lord has held the "doors" of opportunity wide open for us during the whole year, and never in the past did so many of the Swedish people in one year have the true explanation of God's Word set before their minds. We have also in this year witnessed very encouraging proofs that this labor has not been done "in vain." A good number of the Lord's people in "Babylon," as well as some out of it all over the country, have got their eyes of understanding opened to see the wonderful Plan of God. Nearly a hundred of these have already symbolized their full consecration to the Lord and to obedience to His holy will.

One of the primary means to accomplish these results was your wonderful PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, which

has been publicly presented in from one to five places at the same time on 279 days out of the 365 of the year, with a total attendance of more than 400,000. Although our economic circumstances caused the stopping of the DRAMA a few weeks ago, we have still a good hope, D.V., to be enabled to start this branch again very soon. The dear Colporteurs have also, by their energetic and faithful labor of love for the Truth, succeeded to such an extent that we have circulated 8,157 more cloth-bound copies of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES than we did during the previous year. One single Colporteur sister--physically not very strong--has sold 5,962 copies of the STUDIES this year. During the last three years and three months this same sister has sold 18,662 copies.

The free Tract distribution, the Newspaper work and the regular Pilgrim service have also been carried on

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with the usual success. Six Swedish brethren have taken part in the Pilgrim service, and their work has been highly appreciated among the friends everywhere. The same can be said also respecting our Conventions, quite a number of which have been held in different parts of the country. Although a considerable decrease in the number of foreign subscriptions on the Swedish WATCH TOWER has taken place in the year, still the total number of its subscribers has not decreased in the least, but exceeds all previous figures.

Our office work has grown immensely. As the book stock here was nearly exhausted just after October, 1914, we have during this year republished all six volumes of the STUDIES (in seven editions, or 73,500 copies), the MANNA book (4,000 copies), the DRAMA textbook (two editions, 13,000 copies), the free SCENARIOS (four editions, 248,000 copies), pamphlets, etc. The correspondence has also grown to a considerable degree. The following figures will show you as to the exactness of these things.

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Respecting the future of our work, the outlook is (as we have chronologically passed our last Scriptural "landmark," and are surrounded by the roaring of the towering waves in the eddy of which present governments and institutions, already shaking and trembling, will soon be overthrown) more hidden than at earlier times, and our prospects are correspondingly in a still fuller degree built wholly and only on faith. Yet, we are of good courage, knowing that the Lord Himself shall never leave nor forsake any of those who are truly His, but shall overrule and make all things serve their highest and eternal interests, according to His own wisdom and love. Today the Truth friends in Sweden are not less (but probably more) determined than ever by the Lord's grace to remain faithful toward Him and His Cause, and to use all opportunities

still remaining to proclaim His glorious Truth, until the final end, that we also, with yourself and all of His faithful followers, "in due time," may hear His blessed "Well done, good and faithful servants."

We are continually more grateful than words can tell you, our beloved Brother Russell, for all the blessings and helps we have received through your faithful and important ministries in the Lord. You have indeed a large room in our hearts, and you are always with thankfulness and joy included in our prayers before the Throne of Heavenly Grace.

Humbly but heartily conveying to you the warmest Christian love and greetings from all the Swedish brethren, I am

Your brother and fellow-servant in the Lord,
AUG. LUNDBORG.

SUMMARY OF THE SWEDISH WORK

| | |
|---|------------|
| STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, circulated at cost..... | 41,280 |
| DRAMA SCENARIOS..... | 11,993 |
| Various other books and booklets, MANNA, TABERNACLE SHADOWS, etc..... | 7,134 |
| ----- | |
| Total..... | 60,407 |
| EKO FRAN TALARSTOLEN (BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY), issued free..... | 370,560 |
| Other free tracts and copies of the Swedish WATCH TOWER..... | 69,286 |
| DRAMA SCENARIOS in Paper form, free..... | 295,600 |
| ----- | |
| Total..... | 735,446 |
| Amounting in tract pages to..... | 18,309,024 |
| ----- | |
| Subscribers to the Swedish WATCH TOWER..... | 2,363 |
| Sets of the SWEDISH TOWER, cloth bound and unbound..... | 480 |
| Subscribers to EKO FRAN TALARSTOLEN..... | 262 |
| Regular subscriptions for the Sermons in Swedish Newspapers..... | 1,208 |
| Meetings held under the auspices of the Society..... | 1,557 |
| Public PHOTO-DRAMA presentations..... | 1,256 |
| Miles traveled in preaching tours..... | 177,399 |
| Letters and cards sent out..... | 10,104 |
| Letters and cards received..... | 8,434 |
| Total number of various sendings out from the office..... | 62,608 |

EXPENDITURES

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Pilgrims, Conventions and other meetings..... | Kr. 9,942.58 = \$ 2,687.18 |
| Translations, printing, binding, paper, etc..... | 51,835.43 = 14,009.58 |

Freight and postage..... 5,632.71 = 1,522.35
 Helps to poor Colporteurs... 2,246.82 = 607.25
 The newspaper service..... 1,444.30 = 390.35
 Office expenses, rent, light,
 heat, etc..... 7,121.32 = 1,924.68
 The PHOTO-DRAMA service..... 49,457.12 = 13,366.79

 Total.....Kr.127,680.28 =\$34,508.18

RECEIPTS

Voluntary donations to
 Tract Fund.....Kr. 26,413.03 =\$ 7,138.65
 Voluntary donations to
 DRAMA service..... 12,653.64 = 3,419.90
 Swedish WATCH TOWER
 subscriptions..... 5,960.98 = 1,611.08
 Sold books, pamphlets, etc.. 50,524.08 = 13,655.16

 Total.....Kr. 95,551.73 =\$25,824.79
 Deficit..... 32,128.55 = 8,683.39

 Kr.127,680.28 =\$34,508.18

REPORT FROM FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND

The Society's representative in its Geneva Office writes as follows:

Dear Brother Russell:--It is with great joy and heartfelt gratitude toward our God and Father and toward our Savior Jesus Christ that I forward to you the yearly Report of the French work. We have learned in Christ's School to love our brethren. Our great wish is to progress in this line and, above all, to love the one whom our Savior has chosen as our Pastor to give us "meat in due season." We have at heart the French work, which we both cherish. It is, therefore, with special gratitude that we are able to thank our God, who has deigned to allow us to glorify His holy name amongst His French children, and to gather by means of the sharp sickle of Truth all those who are desirous of making a Covenant of Sacrifice. ('Psalm 50:5'.) This last year shows an increase in every branch, especially as regards public lectures, the total attendance being 30,795. Below find a statement of the Society's work during the past fiscal year:

Letters and cards received..... 2,320
 Letters and cards sent out..... 1,397
 Volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES sold.... 854
 Various booklets sold..... 5,200
 Bibles and Concordances sold..... 102
 Free literature (B. S. M.) distributed..... 83,000
 Public meetings held..... 209
 Numbers in attendance..... 30,795

Expenditures for public meetings.....2,811 Frs.
 Total cash receipts.....16,303.76 "
 Total expenditure.....16,237 "

 Balance cash on hand..... 66.76 Frs.

 REPORT FROM BIBLE STUDENTS, HUNGARY

Beloved Brother Russell:--

I am very glad to write you, by the grace of the Lord, regarding the spreading of literature and books this year (1915), and of the many joys and blessings which God has bestowed on us in all the trials and testings of the past:

SUMMARY

Books circulated..... 1,650
 Booklets..... 600
 WATCH TOWERS..... 6,000
 BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY, etc.....40,000
 The issuance of Vol. II.--THE TIME IS AT HAND (Hungarian)--is in progress.
 Incoming letters, 957; outgoing, 725.
 207 have made a covenant with our Lord.
 Public meetings held..... 90
 Parlor meetings..... 4,700
 Meetings in the country..... 30

A good number of Rumanian publications were circulated.

We have received the books sent, and are very thankful.

With great love, hope and faithfulness,
 Your colaborer and brother,

CHARLESZ SZABO

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JAMAICA MISSION REPORT

Number Pilgrims at work..... 5
 Places visited (no classes)..... 7
 Public meetings held..... 17
 Total attendance..... 777
 Number semi-private meetings..... 300
 Total attendance..... 2,944
 Number parlor meetings..... 104
 Total attendance..... 810
 Number of miles traveled..... 3,471
 Volumes of STUDIES IN SCRIPTURES sold... 500
 Free matter--BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY..... 60,000

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WORK FOR THE BLIND

GOULD FREE LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND, S. BOSTON, MASS.
(WATCH TOWER Supervision.)

| | |
|--|------------|
| Chapters of SCRIPTURE STUDIES loaned out. | 10,654 |
| WATCH TOWERS, Pamphlets, and BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY..... | 3,174 |
| Weekly Sermons..... | 2,581 |
| Letters received..... | 1,484 |
| Letters sent out..... | 2,176 |
| Sermons mailed to England..... | 3,833 |
| Expenses..... | \$1,073.90 |

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HE ASCENDED, LEADING CAPTIVES

---JANUARY 2.--`ACTS 1:1-14`.---

FIVE SPECIAL POINTS OF THIS STUDY: (1) THE NUMBER OF APOSTLES LIMITED TO TWELVE; (2) THE IMPORTANCE OF THE KINGDOM TO COME; (3) IT WAS NOT THEN DUE TIME TO EXPLAIN THE TIME OF THE KINGDOM'S ESTABLISHMENT; (4) BEFORE THE KINGDOM WOULD COME THE DISCIPLES WOULD HAVE A GREAT WORK TO DO IN PROCLAIMING IT THROUGHOUT THE EARTH; (5) AS THE LORD'S ASCENSION WAS KNOWN TO FEW AND WAS WITHOUT COMMOTION, SO HIS SECOND COMING WOULD IN LIKE MANNER BE KNOWN TO FEW AND BE AS A THIEF.

"When He ascended on High, He led a multitude of captives, and gave gifts unto men."--`Ephesians 4:8`.

OUR lesson is from the pen of St. Luke, as indicated by the first verse. (^Luke 1:3`.)

There are five special features to the Study.

First is the declaration that the Apostles were only those whom Jesus had especially selected to that office--St. Paul, by Divine arrangement, subsequently taking the place of Judas. This is in contradiction to the claim of the Bishops of England and of Rome that they are Apostolic Bishops, with apostolic powers, but it is in full agreement with the Master's statement that all others claiming to be apostles are "liars."--`Revelation 2:2`.

The second point of the lesson is that Jesus, before leaving His Apostles, instructed them concerning the Kingdom of God. This is in full accord with all the records of His previous teachings. Nearly all of His teachings were in respect to this wonderful Kingdom of God

which will be established when He will come in power and great glory, and of which His invited disciples and followers are to be members--sharing His glory and His Throne, as His joint-heirs.

The third point we notice especially is referred to in `Verses 6 and 7`. The Apostles inquired respecting the Kingdom and the time for its blessing of Israel; but Jesus informed them that it was not for them to know the times and seasons respecting the Kingdom (`Acts 1:7`)--that the matter was entirely in the Father's hands. The fourth point of our Study centers in `Verse 8`, where the Lord declares that prior to the establishment of His Kingdom His Church would witness to it throughout the earth--after receiving the blessing at Pentecost. The fifth point of special notice centers in `Verse 11`, in the statement of the angels, "This same Jesus...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven."

WRONG VIEWS OF THE KINGDOM

Peculiar and conflicting views respecting the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Messiah, are held by Protestants. Much more logical, but equally unscriptural, is the view held by Roman Catholics. The confusion of Protestants is lamentable. Some hold that somehow the Kingdom of God began at Pentecost; others hold that somehow it began when Jerusalem was destroyed; and yet all of them realize that the promises made by Jesus respecting His Second Advent must still be future.

Roman Catholics hold that they set up the Kingdom of God about the year 800 A.D.; first, by dividing between clergy and laity, and exalting the clergy to be a special class; then, the Roman Church having great power, and the kings of earth being comparatively weak, Papacy established a spiritual rule over the kings and princes of the earth in the name of Christ--the Popes being recognized as Christ's vicegerants, as reigning instead of Christ, as His substitutes.

The kings and princes of earth were informed that they might continue to rule the people if they would be obedient to the Papacy; that in that event they would be kingdoms of God; but that if they should fail to be obedient to Papacy, the latter would inform the people that such kings were no longer to be recognized, but were disowned by God's spiritual Kingdom, and would appoint other kings and other princes in their stead. The rulers of Europe readily assented to this partnership, by which the people would recognize them as having Divine authorization to rule. Matters have progressed in this way for eleven hundred years. Austria and Hungary still fully assent to the Divine power in Papacy--though others of the kingdoms of Europe have more or less broken the pact.

Great Britain was one of the first to break with Papacy, under the leadership of King Henry VIII. He had a dispute with the Pope, and forthwith proceeded to organize the British people as another kingdom of God

and the Church of England as a separate spiritual kingdom from Papacy; and the king himself and his successors became the heads of both the Church and the state. Lutheranism made similar progress in Scandinavia and amongst the German States. These acknowledged Lutheranism; and Lutheranism in turn acknowledged them as kingdoms of God. Thus today the kingdoms of this world are still kingdoms of God on the authority originally from Papacy and subsequently through Protestants.

AN ERROR--CHRIST'S KINGDOM FUTURE

All intelligent people, Catholics and Protestants, now perceive that a serious mistake was made--that the kingdoms of this world never were kingdoms of Christ, and that the name Christendom has been misapplied to them. That name signifies Christ's Kingdom; and it is very inappropriate to apply it to the warring nations of Europe, now seeking to blow each other off the face of the land and off the face of the sea. Moreover, the Apostle declares that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," and tells us that the Spirit of Christ is manifest in meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love.--`Romans 8:9`; `Galatians 5:22,23`.

We are sure that in all those warring nations there are

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saintly people who manifest the Spirit of Christ; but we are equally sure that the warring kingdoms themselves do not manifest this spirit, and are "none of His." On the contrary, they manifest what the Apostle styles, works of the flesh and of the Devil--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, bitterness. Bible students are convinced that the great war now started in Europe is the beginning of that great trouble which the Bible calls "Armageddon," and which the Bible declares will prepare mankind and usher them into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, which will be "the desire of all nations" (`Haggai 2:7`), and through which a Reign of Righteousness will be established throughout the whole earth.

Jesus did not pretend to tell His people how long or how short the time would be before the establishment of His Kingdom. He declared the matter fully in the Divine care and not proper to be revealed to God's people then. But elsewhere He did tell them of certain indications that would be given them at the proper time, by which they would know, and be enabled to lift up their heads and rejoice, realizing that their deliverance was drawing nigh.

Similarly we are not to understand that the Apostles expected Christ's Kingdom in their day, before their death. On the contrary, we remember that St. Paul, while foretelling his own death, declared that some of the Lord's people would not sleep in death, but would be alive at the Second Coming of Christ and be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." (`1 Corinthians 15:51,52`.)

Similarly St. Peter, without attempting to tell of the times and seasons, declared that he put his message into writing and committed it to holy men for the benefit of the Church after his death.--`2 Peter 1:15`.

Our Lord's words in Verse 8, to the effect that His followers would give a witness throughout the entire world, was a further demonstration that the Kingdom would not come in a few days or a few years, but would be long enough away to give opportunity for a full testimony of the Lord's favor to all people, nations, kindreds and tongues. And so it has been.

"THIS SAME JESUS SHALL SO COME"

Bible students are coming to notice the exact wording of the Scriptures more carefully than formerly. The statement that Jesus would so come again in like manner as they saw Him go into Heaven, has been generally taken to mean that Jesus would come a fleshly or human being. This would be a contradiction of the statement that He was put to death in flesh, but quickened, made alive, resurrected, in spirit. (^ 1 Peter 3:18`.) It would also contradict the Master's words that He was about to ascend up where He was before--to the spirit plane, or condition. It would also contradict His declaration, "Yet

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a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye shall see Me."--`John 14:19`.

In a word, the entire tenor of Scripture is to the effect that when Jesus left the Heavenly glory and was made flesh, it was not the Divine intention that He should remain a fleshly being forever, but quite to the contrary--that He took this earthly condition for the suffering of death and would not need it afterward. Adam was a fleshly, human being; and, in order to be the Redeemer of Adam and his race, Jesus needed to be a perfect human being--"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (^ Hebrews 7:26`.) But there could be no reason why He must continue to be a fleshly being and out of touch with all the Heavenly conditions.

When we remember that the perfect Adam was a little lower than the angels, we must see that the perfect man Jesus was also a little lower than the angels. But that He did not keep this lower condition is fully asserted by St. Paul, who, after telling about His faithfulness even unto death, declares, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and hath given Him a name above every name." (^ Philippians 2:9, 10`.) The exalted Jesus is a spirit Being of the very highest order--"of the Divine nature"--who sat down at the Father's right hand, on the Father's Throne, waiting for the time when He would take His own Throne, establish the Millennial Kingdom and associate the Church with Him in His Throne as His Bride. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in

My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne."--`Revelation 3:21`.

During the forty days after His resurrection, Jesus appeared and disappeared some ten or eleven times, mostly for a few moments each. Our lesson tells us that during these visits to His faithful He gave them instructions. He did not appear to them as a spirit being to strike them down with the glory of His presence, shining above the brightness of the sun, as He subsequently appeared to Saul of Tarsus. (^ Acts 26:13`.) On the contrary, He appeared as a man, sometimes in one form and sometimes in another form--as a gardener, as a traveler, etc. On two occasions He appeared in bodies similar to the one in which He had been crucified, showing the spear marks and the nail prints. These bodies were materialized in the upper room when the doors were shut; and of course clothing was materialized at the same time, for He was not naked.

These manifestations of Jesus were for the purpose of demonstrating unquestionably to His disciples the fact that He was no longer dead. His appearance in different bodies was to prove that none of these bodies was His real spiritual body, but merely a manifestation. The Bible tells us of previous manifestations of the same kind when our Lord was a spirit being, before He became a man. Away back in Abraham's time, the Lord with two angels materialized and talked with Abraham and ate with him. (^ Genesis 18`.) When Jesus arose from the dead, quickened in spirit, He had gotten back again to where He was before. The description of the resurrection change of the Church fits equally well to the Lord. He was sown in death--"in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor [a companion of thieves], raised in glory; sown an animal body, raised a spiritual body."--`1 Cor. 15:42-44`.

"COME IN LIKE MANNER"

It should be carefully noted that the angels did not say, "come in like form." The Lord departed from them in some kind of fleshly body, or form, which would enable them to see Him ascending into the clouds as they could not see His spirit body. The manner of Jesus' going did not appertain to His form. Our Lord's manner of going was quiet, secret, unknown to the world, known only to His disciples, without noise, without ostentation, without trumpets or bugles. He will so come in like manner--unknown to the world. He will be present as a thief in the night; and none will then know of His presence, except His disciples.

How contrary all this is to what we once supposed, when we thought of our Savior as forever degraded to human conditions, which at their best are a little lower than the angelic! How sadly we misunderstood the matter when we used to sing:

"Five bleeding wounds He bears,

Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me!"

When we thus sang, we evidently did not understand the

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methods of the Lord's intercession for His saints any more than we understood His glorification as a spirit being, "far above angels."

Now we understand that the seventh trumpet, with which He comes, is not a literal trumpet, but a symbolical one; and that like the preceding six, it makes no noise upon the air. Now we see that the world will not be conscious of the Master's Second Advent during the thief stage, nor until the Great Time of Trouble, when He shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance. (2 Thessalonians 1:9.) What the world will then see will be the trouble; and gradually they will come to understand that the great King is identified with the trouble which will be making preparation for the establishment of the Reign of Righteousness by the overthrow of everything that is unrighteous.

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THE SPIRIT AT PENTECOST

---JANUARY 9.--`ACTS 2:1-13` .---

WHAT THE PENTECOSTAL BLESSING WAS--ITS IMPORTANCE
TO THE CHURCH THEN AND NOW--THE LESSON IT TAUGHT--
HOW UNDERSTOOD BY SOME AND MISUNDERSTOOD BY OTHERS.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"--1 Corinthians 3:16.

PENTECOST was a notable day in the Jewish calendar. It marked the fiftieth day in the harvest--after the gathering of the first ripe sheaf. Our Lord in His glorious resurrected condition was the Antitype of that sheaf, the First-fruit of God in the great Plan of Redemption. The first forty days, as we have seen, were used in giving occasional lessons to the disciples--helping them over the difficulties of their position, getting them properly started, with proper faith in the resurrection, to make a good witness and to gather out the Lord's jewels from amongst men. But when Jesus left them at the end of the forty days, He instructed them not to begin their ministry at once, but to wait until they would be endued with power from on High--by the Holy Spirit.

Accordingly, they waited ten days, and then their waiting was rewarded by the outpouring of His Spirit upon them in the upper room on the fiftieth day, Pentecost. They did transact just one item of business during those ten days; but it was without authority from the Lord, and was never recognized by Him. It consisted in casting lots for a successor to Judas. As they cast lots on only two men, it followed that one of the two must be the choice of the lots. But the Lord never recognized the matter, and we hear nothing more of Matthias whom they chose. Instead, in due time God brought forth St. Paul --"not a whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles."

APPEARED IN GOD'S PRESENCE

When our Lord ascended, the Apostle declares, He appeared in the presence of God for us--for His Church, for all who would comply with the terms and conditions of discipleship. (Hebrews 9:24 .) He did not appear for the world, but merely for us. He loved the world, He died for the world, and He is yet to bless the world; but the time for the blessing of the world must wait until first the Divine Program in respect to the Church shall have been carried out.

How much of our Lord's time was spent in going to the Heavenly Throne, and how much of the ten days was necessary for the return of the Holy Spirit, we do not know; but we do know from the Apostle's words that the Holy Spirit sent forth upon the waiting disciples in the upper room was the testimony to them that Jesus' work was satisfactory to the Father, that the Father gave the Holy Spirit to Him for His Church, and that Jesus shed it forth.--`Acts 2:33`.

The events of that day of Pentecost were very valuable to the Church at that time, but have been equally valuable to all of the Lord's members. The Scriptures represent that all who are received into God's family receive a begetting of the Holy Spirit; and this begetting was what Pentecost meant to those waiting ones in the upper room. From that time onward they were sons of God; and "if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ" their Lord. (Romans 8:17 .) And so it is with us who have come into the Body of Christ since Pentecost. We do not receive special manifestations of Divine power, such as the cloven tongues that came upon those disciples; but we do receive from God the same Holy Spirit which they received.

MEANING OF THE PENTECOSTAL BLESSING

The Lord represents Jesus and His Church under the figure of a great Priest--Jesus was the Head of that Priest; the Apostles were the first members of the Body,

under the Head; and all the Church of Christ from then till now are members in particular of the same Body, the same Church. The Holy Spirit came with an outward manifestation upon Jesus, the Head of the Church, that we might know thus that He was accepted by the Father. Then at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came with an outward manifestation upon the disciples, in order that they might know that they had been received into the same fellowship, as members of the same Body.

But it was not necessary for us to have an outward demonstration today; for this pouring out of God's blessing was upon the Church as a whole; and as we come into the Church of Christ by a full consecration of our hearts to do the Lord's will, and with full trust in the work of Jesus, we receive the Spirit and are counted in as members of that Church Body, though without any outward demonstration whatever.

We can see a necessity for the outward demonstration in the case of the Apostles for two reasons: First, they were Jews, and had believed in Jesus, had made their consecration and had been received into discipleship by Him. But the Father could not receive any into sonship until after Jesus had died. Additionally, the Father could not recognize any human beings as His children and grant them full forgiveness of sins, full reconciliation and an entrance into His family, until Jesus, as the great High Priest, had not only died, but had ascended up on High and proffered or made applicable the merit of His death on our behalf. And so we read respecting the Apostles before Christ's death: "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."--`John 7:39`.

There had been no human sons of God recognized from the time Adam, the first of these sons, sinned, until Jesus came as the Son of God. The Jews were members of the House of Servants, as we read: "Moses verily was faithful in all His House as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over His own House, whose House are we." (Hebrews 3:5, 6`.) The Pentecostal blessing, therefore,

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was the beginning of the recognition of the followers of Jesus as sons of God and heirs of God's promise.

GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Another matter: At Pentecost the Lord gave gifts to the Apostles, and to the remainder of the Church through them. These gifts were represented in the ability to speak with various tongues and in power to perform miracles--heal the sick, etc. Evidently these gifts were necessary for the establishment of the Church; but they must have all expired when the Apostles, through whom alone they were bestowed upon others, fell asleep in death. But while God has not continued the gifts with the

Church, He has promised something still better; i.e., the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits are more valuable than the gifts, because they represent character and not merely powers.--`1 Corinthians 12:31; 13`.

The fruits of the Spirit are meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love; and these evidence that the individual possessing them has become a member of the Church of Christ, and has been begotten of the Holy Spirit. Much therefore as we rejoice that the Apostles had the gifts and afterwards cultivated the fruits, we are glad that we now have the fruits of the Spirit.

One of the gifts of the Spirit was manifested by one of the Apostles immediately--the power of speaking with unknown tongues. They were all Galileans, and therefore used to only the one dialect. The testimony, however, is that under the Divine power of the Holy Spirit they spoke in various languages so that the people of the countries represented by those languages understood clearly and were astonished, saying, "Are not all these which speak Galileans, and how hear we every man in our own tongue?"--`Acts 2:7, 8`.

We are not to understand that the miracle was in the hearing, but in the speaking. It was not that all the people from the different lands heard the same utterance, as though it had been in their own language, as stated for them, but that the different Apostles speaking these different tongues were all heard by the people and appreciated by the people who used those tongues. It was a miracle, surely, and had the designed effect. Not merely was it a convincing power and experience for the Apostles themselves and for the other believers of that time, but it became a witness to the holy Jews who had gathered at Jerusalem from all the nations of the world.

These annual gatherings at Jerusalem were directly commanded by the Lord through Moses, and were observed by all the Jews who remained loyal to God and His Word. If they had moved into other countries and were located there for business reasons, they nevertheless came regularly every year to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. It was these reverential people who were especially blessed at Pentecost. For although some of the number tried to explain away the phenomenon by saying that the Apostles had evidently drunk too freely of grape juice, new wine, nevertheless, apparently the majority of those who heard were provoked with such an interpretation and took more readily to what the Apostles said, and realized in time that they were all telling the same glorious Message of the love of God, though telling it in various languages, so that all present might understand.

A TEMPLE OF GOD

The figure of a temple is variously used in respect to the Church. Each Christian is spoken of as being a temple of the Holy Spirit after he receives the begetting

of the Spirit. Each congregation might be considered the Temple of God. And the Church as a whole when gathered to the Heavenly condition will be God's Temple, in that God will dwell in them. According to another figure, each Christian is a living stone in preparation for the great Temple of the future, now being chiseled, polished, made ready for his place in the Temple above.

The thought is that as God in olden times was represented in the Tabernacle by the Shekinah glory of the Most Holy, and was also represented in the literal temple of Jerusalem, so He is represented now in all those who are begotten by His Holy Spirit, and will be represented further by all who walk in harmony with their spirit-begetting and continue to abide in the Lord's love.

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ST. PETER'S PENTECOSTAL SERMON

---JANUARY 16.--`ACTS 2:21-39` .---

THE SIGNIFICATION OF PENTECOST--SPEAKING WITH OTHER TONGUES--ST. PETER'S EXPLANATION OF THIS--DAVID NOT ASCENDED TO HEAVEN--HE SPAKE NOT OF HIMSELF, BUT PROPHETICALLY OF JESUS' RESURRECTION--PRICKED TO THE HEART--OTHER FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS--NONE TO BE SAVED IN IGNORANCE, THOUGH JESUS DIED FOR ALL.

"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."--`Acts 2:21`.

TODAY'S lesson is a most interesting Bible Study; for it covers a wide range of Truth. The Apostles, in harmony with Jesus' instructions, had waited in the upper room for the Pentecostal blessing, as necessary to their qualification before beginning their great work as the representatives and mouthpieces of Jesus and Jehovah. It came on the fiftieth day after Jesus' resurrection, in harmony with the type.--`Leviticus 23:15-21`; `1 Corinthians 15:20`.

The Apostles received the begetting of the Holy Spirit and with it certain outward manifestations of miraculous power, which in turn they were privileged to communicate to all believers by the laying on of their hands. These special "gifts of the Spirit" were evidently intended to assist in the establishment of the Church and to mark the Apostles as the special representatives of God. These were but eleven in number, until St. Paul was received of the Lord, and became "not one whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles." (`2 Cor. 12:11`.) We have these Apostles still with us, represented by their teachings.

Although, later on, certain Bishops of the Church

claimed to be Apostles also, they never have had any authority according to the Bible, never have been able to convey any of the miraculous gifts and are referred to by Jesus as falsely claiming authority which they do not possess. (Revelation 2:2`.) With the death of the Apostles and the death of those to whom they had committed these gifts, all such gifts necessarily ceased, being supplanted by the fruits of the Spirit, developed through knowledge, faith and obedience.

SYNOPSIS OF ST. PETER'S SERMON

The eleven Apostles, exercising their gift of tongues, began to talk to the assembled crowd of Jews who were worshipping at Jerusalem--not merely residents of Palestine,

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but thousands from all parts of the world, gathered at Jerusalem at that season in harmony with the demands of the Law, to worship the Lord. From their dress, etc., the Apostles were recognized as Galileans. Much astonishment therefore was manifested when they were heard talking in the various tongues of the various nations. At first some thought that they were intoxicated and uttering merely peculiar sounds; but presently the multitude began to gather themselves to one and another of the Apostles as they heard their own language spoken. This not only called attention to the Apostles, but also manifested a Divine power and made their

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Message the more impressive.

The essence of the preaching was that Jesus, who had been crucified, had risen from the dead and had now shed forth this miraculous power upon His followers. This led to the mention of the prophecy of David which foretold the resurrection of Messiah, saying, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol"--Hades. (Psalm 16:10` ; `Acts 2:27`.) The Apostles pointed out that this was fulfilled in Jesus, in that God raised Him from the dead; but that it was never fulfilled in the Prophet David, who on the contrary was still dead in his sepulchre, awaiting resurrection. David, as a prophet, had merely foretold the resurrection of Jesus.

With various details the preaching went on, explaining the righteousness of Jesus, the beauties of His teaching, the wickedness of those who had crucified Him without a cause, and showing how the entire Jewish nation was guilty before God, because as a people they were bound by their Law Covenant and the action of their officials had brought condemnation and guilt upon the whole people. Three thousand believed. The case was so plain that they were pricked to the heart--they realized that Jesus was the Son of God, and that a great crime

had been committed in crucifying Him. With fear and sorrow they cried out, "What shall we do?" The answer was, "Repent"--God is gracious; He will forgive you. In further explanation, they were told that they and their rulers had done this wicked deed in ignorance, and that God would very graciously forgive those who would acknowledge their sin and call upon Him for forgiveness. They did so; they made a consecration of their lives to God, and became followers of Jesus.

DIVINE FAVOR ABOUT TO RETURN TO ISRAEL

The Bible declares that the Jewish people, because of their rejection of Messiah, were cut off from God's favor. Nevertheless the time is at hand when they shall be brought back again to the favor of God. Their eyes have been holden for more than eighteen centuries now, as are the eyes of the world in general. Only the few have the eyes of their understanding open to see the Truth respecting these matters. St. Paul avers this, saying, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not."--`2 Corinthians 4:4`.

But through the Prophet, God has assured us that in due time all the blind eyes will be opened and all the deaf ears will be unstopped. (`Isaiah 35:5`.) To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, will eventually come a full knowledge of the grace of God through Christ. It will then be for them to accept or reject intelligently. The rejectors will be wicked in a sense that none of the world are wicked now, because their wrong-doings are largely based upon ignorance and superstition. When brought to the full light, their crisis, or judgment, will be to everlasting life if they accept and obey the Lord, or to everlasting death if they sin against and wilfully reject the light and opportunities of that blessed Millennial Day.

Respecting the Jews in that coming time, it is written that they shall look upon Him whom they pierced, and mourn because of Him; and that the Lord at that time will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and of supplication. (`Zechariah 12:8-10`.) But that return of God's favor to Natural Israel will not come until Spiritual Israel shall first have been completed. Bible Students believe that we are now at the dawning of the New Dispensation, that the Church class will soon be completed and glorified with the Savior in His Kingdom, and that then, forthwith, God's mercy will begin to operate toward the Jews again. This seems to be the clear teaching of St. Paul in `Romans 11:25-32`.

THE CURSE TO BE ROLLED AWAY

Another item of special importance in the lesson is that the Hell to which Jesus went was not Hell-fire, but the grave, the state of death. God did not raise Him up from the Fire, but raised Him from the dead. We are to remember that this same word--Hell, Sheol, Hades--

is used in the Bible respecting all mankind. All the good and the bad--old and young, male and female, of every nation--go down to the Bible Hell; and according to the Bible they sleep there, awaiting the resurrection Morning and the awakening of all the dead--"every man in his own order"--not all at once.--1 Corinthians 15:23`.

The Bible represents that we are now in a night time, in which Satan is "the prince of this world," and Sin and Death reign. But it pictures the New Dispensation of Messiah's Kingdom as the glorious dawning of the New Day of blessing for mankind, in which the curse of sin and death will be rolled away and the blessing of the Lord through Messiah's Kingdom will extend to every member of the race, giving all an opportunity for eternal life. This will not be the same opportunity that is granted to the Church at the present time--not an opportunity for glory, honor and immortality on the spirit plane, as the Church have--but an opportunity of returning to human perfection, to all that was lost in Eden and redeemed at Calvary.

OUR GOLDEN TEXT--ITS BEAUTY

Here we note the beauty of the 21st verse--our Golden Text. The death of Jesus guarantees that all who will call upon the Lord in sincerity of heart will be saved from sin and death. It guarantees that all shall be brought to the condition where they will understand sufficiently to desire to call for this blessing. The heathen, the majority of people of civilized lands, and the Jews, have no such hearing ears now. Only the few out of every nation have yet received this great blessing. Only these, brought back into relationship with God, have yet been rescued from their alienated condition; and they are to be ultimately saved in the First Resurrection, to glory, honor, immortality and a share in the Kingdom of Messiah. Through these, ultimately the blessing of light and knowledge and uplifting influences will reach every member of the race, to afford all an opportunity for life everlasting in a world-wide Eden.

CASTLES

Let them that would build castles in the air,
Vault thither, without step or stair;
Instead of feet to climb, take wings to fly,
And think their turrets top the sky.
But let me lay all my foundations deep,
And learn, before I run, to creep.
Who digs through rocks to lay his ground-works low,
May in good time build high and sure, though slow.

CHRISTOPHER HARVEY.

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International Bible Students Association Classes
STUDIES AND LECTURES BY MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION

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PUBLISHED BY
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
CHARLES T. RUSSELL, PRESIDENT
"BROOKLYN TABERNACLE," 13-17 HICKS ST.,
BROOKLYN, N. Y., U. S. A.

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"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY"

"Pray without ceasing; in everything
give thanks."--`1 Thessalonians 5:17,18`.

IN THE beginning, when Adam was in harmony with God, he was in the condition represented in the Scriptures as covenant relationship with God. The Word declares that Adam broke this holy Covenant. (`Hosea 6:7`, margin.) He became a sinner; and his children, born later, were sinners with him, through heredity. Instead of being born in covenant relationship with God, the children of Adam were born aliens. But God has had dealings with a few who exercised special faith and a desire to come into harmony with Him. Abel, the second son of Adam, was one of these. He approached God with an animal sacrifice and was accepted. Enoch and Noah also came into a condition of fellowship with the Lord by faith, even though they were still legally under the condemnation passed upon Adam, the Ransom-price not yet having been given.

Later on, God entered into covenant relationship with Abraham, because of his great faith and obedience; and afterwards with his son Isaac; then with his grandson Jacob. Still later, God entered into relationship with the seed of Jacob, under the Law Covenant at Sinai. The Lord had changed the name of Jacob to Israel--"a prince with God" (`Genesis 32:24-30`); and the whole nation of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, were received as God's people, and were treated as if without sin. They had the privilege of going to Him in prayer. But the sins of the Jewish nation were only typically blotted out from year to year. The blood of bulls and goats could never really take away sin, and the Jews held only the relationship of servants to God.

The Gentiles were altogether without God. They had no privilege of prayer. We come down to the beginning of the Gospel Age and to the case of Cornelius. We read that he was a just man, who gave much alms to the people and prayed always. But his prayers could not be accepted, even after Jesus died. The death of Jesus did not bring Cornelius into covenant relationship with God. But when the seventy symbolic weeks of Jewish favor had been fulfilled, the due time had come for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles. God was then ready to receive him, and He sent an angel to him, who gave him this message from the Lord: "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God." The prayers and the alms of Cornelius had risen up as an incense before the Lord.

Had God not accepted these offerings before? No. They had been noted of God, but had not been received. God's way of receiving--except in a limited or typical way previous to the Gospel Age--is by certain definite means which He has appointed--through an Advocate in this Age, and through a Mediator in the next. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," says Jesus. Even when the due time had arrived, Cornelius could not come until God sent him word how to proceed.

KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH NECESSARY

The angel of the Lord said to Cornelius: "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts 11:13,14 .) Those words were necessary to his saving--to the bringing of him into covenant relationship with God. Cornelius, being obedient, sent for Simon Peter, who gave him the necessary instruction for drawing nigh unto God through Jesus. And unless we come to the Father through Christ, our prayers would not be received any more than those of Cornelius had been.

What St. Peter told Cornelius was to the effect that God had provided a great Sin-Offering; that Jesus had tasted death for every man; that now, in advance of dealing with the world, God is taking out a Little Flock, to be joined with Christ in the blessing of the world. When Cornelius heard the good Message, he believed with all his heart; and likewise those who were with him. Doubtless he had heard of Jesus before, but now he understood the matter. He had been in the right condition of heart all along. He had been praying and fasting. But even so he could not be accepted of God except through Jesus. He must have Christ as his Advocate.

HOW JESUS BECOMES OUR ADVOCATE

But what does it mean to have Jesus as our Advocate? It means that first, we must accept Him as our Ransom from sin and death. Next, He tells us, "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." By merely believing that Jesus died, and that He was holy, etc., no one can become His disciple. "The devils also believe, and tremble." But justification to life comes when we receive the Lord on His terms. Then He becomes our Advocate.

No one has a right to expect an answer to prayer except one who has become a disciple of Christ through full consecration. And whosoever cometh to the Father by Him shall in no wise be cast out. (John 6:37 .) There is but one exception to this rule, and this is a class of minors, children lacking the full age of responsibility

and of comprehension of these matters, one or both of whose parents are disciples of Christ. That age of responsibility would vary--in some it might be from twelve to fifteen years of age, and in some even later. But whoever reaches the point of full comprehension and responsibility, and does not consecrate himself to the Lord, would lose the privilege of prayer. In the case, then, of a minor child, either of whose parents is consecrated, he would have a right to look for answers to his prayers to God.

The Lord does not hinder any one from bowing the knee. Savages do so right along, but their prayers do not ascend up to God. The Jews were at one time an exception as regards prayer, but they were a typical people. That arrangement, however, was temporary, and has passed away. But soon they will again have the privilege of prayer, through the great Mediator; and all the world may join them in this privilege. Jesus will not be the Advocate for the world. This arrangement is only for the Church of the present Age.

OUR LIVES TO BE A PRAYER

Prayer seems to be the natural attitude of the human mind toward the Almighty. Even the heathens have a disposition to pray. Their fears, their hopes, all lead them to appeal to some great Power beyond themselves. But the people of God, who know of His Wisdom, Power and Love, and who have met the conditions of acceptable prayer, are alone authorized to come to the Throne of Grace. We realize what a blessing it is to have access to God, access to His presence--to have the ear of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe. We know that with the emperors and kings of earth it is very difficult to gain a hearing; and that with people of great prominence it is not easy to secure an audience. Yet the great God has made provision that His people may come to Him and make their petitions known.

The unrepentant sinner cannot come to God. But Divine Wisdom has made arrangement by which the sinner can get rid of his sin, and can then come to Him in prayer and communion. The Jews had typical sacrifices, a typical Atonement Day, and a typical forgiveness of sins. But the forgiveness of our sins, through the merit of Christ's sacrifice, is actual, and brings us to the place of acceptableness with the Father. He is pleased to have His children come to Him in prayer. And it is our glad privilege to offer Him worship and praise--the homage of our hearts.

We would make a distinction between worship and prayer. Worship is a bowing down, an acknowledgment of the majesty of God, an act of reverence, of adoration. But prayer is the offering of a petition. So when the

Lord's people are encouraged in His Word to come to Him in prayer, it is with the understanding that they are informed before they come as to what is pleasing to God for them to request. We have an example given of what a proper prayer would be in the one which our Lord taught His disciples.

The Holy Spirit is the blessing most to be sought. This Spirit of God may be possessed in a greater or a lesser measure. We are given a measure of the Spirit when we are accepted as the disciples of Christ; and that flame of love there started is to become a consuming power in our lives. It is to burn out everything contrary to God, that our life may be a burning and shining light. In proportion as we recognize that we are deficient in the Spirit of righteousness, the Spirit of Truth, in that same proportion we should be importunate in prayer. Whoever realizes his need, and knows the Source from which he can obtain the needed supply, will come to the Throne of Heavenly Favor. We are not to neglect the duties and responsibilities of life in order to spend much time each day upon our knees, but our entire life is to be a ceaseless prayer.

From the time we become the Lord's children, we should strive more and more to attain the character-likeness to Christ, and we should continue in prayer and not faint. We should seek for more and more of the Spirit of the Lord, and should see that we fulfil the conditions by which we may obtain the filling of the Spirit. In this sense of the word, we should pray without ceasing, continuing to present the petition until we receive what we desire. But we shall not obtain the fulness of our desire until we are changed into the higher life, into the perfection of the new nature, in the resurrection. Then we shall pray no more. Then we shall be fully satisfied. Prayer will be swallowed up of praise.

OUR LORD'S SAMPLE PRAYER

In the prayer taught us by our Lord, we first give honor to God, recognizing Him as our Father, acknowledging His greatness, and expressing the desire that His Name be hallowed. We remember the Kingdom that is promised; and we tell Him of our desire of heart for that Kingdom to come. We pray that His will may be fully done on earth. This implies that we have given up our own will, that we wish to have God's will wholly done in our mortal bodies.

In this prayer there is a brief mention of our daily temporal needs: "Give us this day our daily bread"--no stipulation of fruits and vegetables, of delicacies, etc.--but simply our necessities for the day. We ask no more--we wish no more. Then we pray that our trespasses may be forgiven, **EVEN AS WE FORGIVE**. Finally comes the petition for our protection from evil influences. This expresses the appreciation of the fact that there are temptations from those with whom we have contact, and

from the powers of evil--the powers of the air--and from our own flesh; and that we need Divine aid. The petitions of this prayer, however, are very brief.

BECOMING MODESTY IN PRAYER

It would seem as though many have a wrong conception of prayer. We hear some people trying to tell the Lord things that He knows better than they. It is always improper, even in our intercourse with men, to tell a person better educated than ourselves anything about that which he knows far better than we. Jesus and the Apostles never undertook to give any instructions to the Father regarding His Plan, so far as we know. And when any one attempts to give the Lord instructions, he deceives neither the Lord nor others who hear; for He knows and they know that such a one is not addressing God, but the people. We have before mentioned an announcement in a Boston paper that on a certain occasion "Rev. So-and-so delivered the most beautiful prayer ever offered to a Boston audience."

Undoubtedly if we had the right conception of prayer --the Bible conception--our prayers in public would be very brief. The Scriptures are the only criterion, the only guide. They give us no account of any instance where the Lord's saints offered lengthy prayers in public. Praying in an unknown tongue would also be valueless, the Apostle Paul tells us, unless some one present interpret the same; and if one prays in an incoherent manner, so that he cannot be understood by those who hear, prayer might as well be offered in an unknown tongue.

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"How shall any say, Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? While this shows that the Lord wishes us to take into consideration the hearers, we are not to pray to them, but are to turn the thoughts of all toward God, to an appreciation of His Goodness, of His Wisdom, Love and Mercy.

Leaving out all thought of teaching the people at that time, we should seek to direct all in a reverent manner to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, in thought, that they may humble themselves before God. That which Christian people sometimes attempt to do in prayer should be done in preaching. According to the declaration of the Word, it has not pleased God to save by prayer those who believe, but by preaching. (Romans 10:14; 1 Corinthians 1:21.) This does not mean necessarily public speaking, but includes also more private proclamation of the Truth and also preaching by the printed page. We are to follow the direction of the Word in all ways.

While we thus speak of public prayer, and in respect to the propriety of brevity, and of the examples of Scripture concerning this, we would not give the thought that

one should be limited in his private devotions. He who was perfect set us an example of private prayer. Our Lord sometimes prayed all night. But we presume that with the most of us it would be better not to do this; for we would be weaker for service the next day. In our weakness and imperfection we are probably not able to appreciate the peculiar position of our Lord. We would have nothing that we could say to the Lord which would keep us all night in prayer, except that which would be repetition. And our Master said: "Use not vain repetition"--"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." We are to ask rather for the condition of heart whereby we may be able to receive whatever He shall see fit to send, that we may get a blessing out of each of the Lord's providences.

So, then, summing up the matter, our petitions in public should be modeled considerably after the sample our Lord gave His disciples--a brief expression of earnest desire for the coming of God's Kingdom, an acknowledgment of sin, a request for Divine forgiveness and help and supply of our needs, and a rendering of worship and praise. We think this should be about the range of our private devotions also, as a rule, respecting ourselves. It is eminently appropriate, however, that we remember one another at the Throne of Grace in private, and in a general way in public. But evidently the instruction of Scripture is that we should not seek to use prayer as a means to gain earthly favors, or tell the Lord what we wish done, or to be heard of men, but that we are to put first the spiritual things, the things for which we have been instructed to pray.

CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTABLE, EFFECTIVE PRAYER

When Jesus said to His disciples, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him," He was setting before them a glorious standard in respect to the Heavenly Father. But later on, this standard was very largely lost. During the Dark Ages the God of Love was made to appear anything but loving and kind, and as having no real interest in the majority of His creatures. It was made to appear that the few in whom He had an interest were those who were relentless, cruel and vicious toward all outside their pale.

How terribly our God has been maligned by those who have claimed to be His special representatives! How differently was He depicted by the Son who knew Him so well! Hear Him: "Be ye like unto your Father which is in Heaven; for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." When the Apostles asked Jesus whether they should call fire to come down from Heaven upon the Samaritans who refused to sell them bread, what was the Master's reply? "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of! The Son of Man came not to destroy men's

lives, but to save them." And He was the Image of the Father, and came not to do His own will.

Man is in a sadly fallen condition and needs to be restored to the image of God, to the likeness of God, to the condition of love, mercy and sympathy of which God is the embodiment. Yet, notwithstanding our fallen condition, parents love to give good gifts to their children. What parent, if his child should ask for a fish, would give him a serpent? Or if he should ask for bread, would give him a stone? And as we have received these traits from the Lord, and still have them to a considerable extent even in our blemished condition, we may form some idea of how He who is the Perfect One, the Infinite One, would delight to give good gifts to His children --"How much more shall your Father in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" And His very best things are the spiritual things.

PROSPECTIVE SONS BEFORE PENTECOST

We are to remember that our Lord when on earth was in the fullest sense the Representative of the Father in the flesh. He was indeed "God manifest in the flesh." And those who were of the right attitude of heart were able to see the character of the Father in the Son. Those who believed on Jesus were accepted and treated in many respects as though they had been already fully received of the Father. The Scriptures, however, declare that the Holy Spirit had not yet come. We see that the Spirit could not be given in begetting power until Jesus had died, and had entered into the presence of God to make reconciliation for the sins of the Church. Forty days after the resurrection of Christ, He ascended to Heaven to present His merit, imputing it on behalf of all who would become His disciples during the Gospel Age, the period of the High Calling.

Even though the Holy Spirit had not yet been bestowed, Jesus told His disciples that they might pray, "Our Father." This was in view of the condition of sonship into which they were so soon to be ushered. God is not the Father of any others than those who come to Him in His appointed way--through His Son as the Ransom-price, having made a full surrender of themselves and their all to God. While our Lord was still in the flesh, His true followers were sons in a prospective sense. And yet, after the Master's death and resurrection, He told them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on High. The Father would defer the answer to some of their prayers. He would not give them the blessing just at the time it was asked. There might be some good reason for withholding it until some future time--as in the granting of the Holy Spirit in begetting. Yet they were to hold themselves in the proper attitude of faith, that they might be ready for the blessing when it should come from on High.

Their prayer might properly have been: "Heavenly

Father, we have learned that at the proper time Thou wilt give us the Holy Spirit. We perceive that Thou hast already given Thy Spirit to Jesus our Master; that at the time of His baptism He received an unction from on High. And so we wait for the Holy Spirit--we wait to receive this unction, this blessing from Thee." And

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those who tarried in the upper room after the ascension of the Lord, received at Pentecost this very blessing, the Holy Spirit--in its due time.

JESUS THE ONLY WAY

If we come down to the present, and inquire what we may pray for, the Lord answers through His Word that we may not pray except upon these same terms; namely, faith in His Son as our Redeemer, and a full dedication, devotion, of ourselves to walk in the footsteps of the Master --our blessed Exemplar. No man can come to the Father but by Him. All such will be accepted, up to the required number of the Elect. It would, therefore, not be right to encourage any to come to the Father in prayer until they have become members of His family by a full consecration.

In the case of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, which we have cited in this article, we have seen that he was a just man, a good man. But he did not belong to the Jewish nation, to whom God had given His Law. The only way in which Cornelius could have come into God's favor prior to His appointed time--three and a half years after the cross--was to have become a Jewish proselyte. But when it became chronologically due time for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles, this good man was notified, and gladly accepted the conditions and became a son of God, through faith in Christ. He received the begetting and anointing of the Holy Spirit, just as the Jews had previously received them. All this shows us that God has a particular course marked out by which any may become His children. Unless they come in the appropriate way and in the appropriate time, none will be accepted as sons of the Highest.

PRAYERS THAT COME UP AS A MEMORIAL

God's dealing with Cornelius would indicate that in the case of any who now come to God, and pray to Him, not knowing the appointed way, their prayers would, like those of Cornelius, come up as a memorial before God. As the Lord took notice of the prayers of Cornelius and the desires of his heart to worship and serve God, so we may suppose that He would take notice now of prayers and desires to come close to Him. He might not send some one like Peter to give them instruction at this time. That would depend upon His decision as to whether this

would be the course of wisdom, as to whether such a one was suited to His present purpose. But any prayers offered in sincerity would not pass unnoticed, but would receive reward in due time, whether now or later.

Suppose that one were living in a heathen land where

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Christ was not known, and suppose such a one was feeling after God and praying according to his light. The Lord could not accept him as His child under those conditions; but He might, if His Wisdom approved, guide that honest seeker to a knowledge of Christ, whether it would come through tracts in the mail, through a sermon, or through meeting one of the Lord's ambassadors who could communicate with him in his own tongue. We are sure that every hungry soul will receive the light and the knowledge necessary to his salvation in the Lord's own good time. After hearing of God, and of the manifestation of His love in Christ, it remains for each individual to accept or to reject the Message. If he fails or refuses to make consecration to God when he receives the light, no prayer he would offer would be accepted.

THE CHIEF OF ALL GOOD GIFTS

We read that the Heavenly Father will give good gifts to those who ask Him; that is, He will give that which would be good for them. We are not to dictate to Him what His blessings are to be. We are not to ask for all manner of earthly things. In the case of the Jews, they asked chiefly for the earthly blessings; because Heavenly blessings were not promised them. But we who come into the relationship of sons of God are to pray for what He has specifically promised us--the Holy Spirit. And our Father in Heaven will give us those things which are best to fit and prepare us for the Heavenly Kingdom.

The Lord will give whatever temporal blessings are to the best interests of the New Creature. Everything that He would give will be a good gift. We do not always know what would be best for us. A parent dealing with a child might find it necessary at certain times to give medicine instead of food. The parent gives this for the good of the child. So with our Heavenly Father. Sometimes He gives us tests of faith, tests of loyalty, tests of love. All these experiences are designed to develop in us strength of character, and to thereby fit us for further and more advanced blessings.

The Father deals with us as New Creatures in Christ. If, for instance, some of His children are becoming overcharged with the blessings or cares of this life, God might give to such some kind of a purgative as respects earthly things. Such a one might break a leg or have some other earthly calamity--something that would work out for his good as a New Creature. If the Lord's consecrated people would all come to the point where their

chief desire, their highest aspiration, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might be filled with the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of a sound mind, that they might know and do His will, what a great blessing it would bring! It is the will of the Lord that His children should have in large measure this chiefest of all blessings, but He grants it only on certain conditions. He withholds it until they learn to appreciate its value and to so earnestly desire it that they will apply themselves diligently to meet these conditions, and will continue in supplication until their importunity shall bring down the answer.

THE UNSPEAKABLE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

The Apostle Paul exhorts the saints that they "pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance." These words do not signify that we should be always upon our knees or continually uttering a prayer. But we should never cease to pray, and our prayers should be in the spirit--earnest, sincere. The children of God are not to "say prayers," they are to pray. There is much formal prayer --much saying of prayers--which do not get higher than the head of the one who repeats the words. The Scriptures speak of this as drawing near to God with the lips when the heart is far from Him. It would be better that we should not approach the Lord at all than that we should do so in an improper manner.

It is a most wonderful privilege to draw near the great Creator and Lord of Heaven and earth; and we should come in the spirit of reverence and devotion. Our Lord declared that the Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in Truth. We must come only in the name of Christ. He is the only Way of approach. And we must come thoughtfully and earnestly. We should not think of uttering a single word that we do not mean and have not thought upon. We believe a great many have done themselves injury by going through a form of words in a mere formalistic manner. This is not prayer. True prayer is the language of the heart. Therefore the greater our earnestness, the more

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acceptable the prayer will be, and the greater blessing shall we receive.

We are not to come to God without faith and without an earnest desire for His blessing. We are to enter into the spirit of our petition, that the Lord may see the earnestness of our heart in the matter. There seems to be a difference between the thought of prayer and that of thanksgiving. Prayer, as we have said, is the offering of petition. None may come to the Lord with recognition, except those who have come into Christ. Others are strangers and aliens. But any one may express thanks

to God or render worship, adoration, homage.

PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER NECESSARY

There is a difference also between prayer and supplication. Prayer would be any petition, great or small; whereas supplication would mean a special desire for a thing--an earnest entreaty. Whether it be ordinary prayer or be supplication--an intense form of prayer--we should always come in the spirit, with appreciation of the fact that we are coming into the presence of the great Jehovah, and that it is a privilege accorded to only a very few at this time.

And we are to "watch thereunto, with all perseverance." If we really believe that the Lord has indicated that we should pray, and that it is His will to give us the things we need, and above all His Holy Spirit, then we should be alert to note when we receive the answer to our petitions. If we pay no attention to our prayers after they are uttered, never look to see whether they are being answered, this would indicate that we have not really appreciated our need. It would seem that this is the reason why God does not answer many of our prayers more quickly. We should learn to watch for the answers to our prayers, and thus learn the lesson of appreciation and gratitude to Him as we realize that He has granted us our request.

We are, then, to pray with perseverance, not watching merely for a few hours for the fulfilment, nor merely for a day or a week. The Lord might see best to defer the fulfilment of our petition, either to test our faith or to bring us into a better condition to receive the blessing. Perhaps we have all had these experiences, and were thus more hungry for the answer when it came. We are to be sure that the Lord is never indifferent to the pleading of His children, and will pursue the course which is best for us, just as would a faithful teacher with his pupil, and as would a loving parent with his child. Our Father in Heaven wishes to give us His best things, and will not withhold anything that is really good. (Psalm 84:11`.) But He requires sometimes that we shall wait for a considerable time. At other times, there may be a speedy answer to our petitions.

Whether we are on our knees or in the busy walks of life our hearts should go out continually to the Lord for His guidance in all our affairs and experiences, that we may serve Him in a manner that will be pleasing and acceptable to Him, that we may be shielded from temptations that without His aid would be beyond our endurance, and that He will in His own due time deliver us from all evil and imperfection and grant us a place in His Heavenly Kingdom. Dear brethren, let us constantly put into practise the injunction of our Master, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."--`Mark 14:38`.

SHOULD WE WRESTLE IN PRAYER?

But although the Scriptures enjoin upon us persistency in prayer, and the parable of The Importunate Widow also teaches this, nothing in the Word of God, in our judgment, warrants us in doing what some people call "wrestling with God in prayer." We believe that our God is willing to give us the things that are best for us, and anything that God is not willing to give us we should not desire. We should not strive to induce the Lord to do anything that He is unwilling to do, but should wish that only His will be done. At the time when Jacob wrestled with the angel, we would understand that he did the right and proper thing. Any of us in the same position would have done well if we had followed his course. That was a rare occasion. Jacob was returning to his home for the first time since he had fled to Padan-Aram from his brother Esau, and he feared that Esau might still seek his life. And now the Lord had manifested Himself to Jacob in the form of this angel. The angel could have broken away, but he permitted Jacob to get into that earnest attitude where he said: "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me!"

But we do not need to wrestle with God for His special blessing. We already have this blessing. We are not servants crying for a crumb. The Lord has put upon us His best robe; He has given us His Holy Spirit. But He has promised us certain things conditional upon our asking, and He wishes us to continue to come to Him in faith, in simple, earnest prayer--not wrestling in prayer.

THE KINGDOM AT THE DOOR

The world is full of woe and wretchedness because of sin. And our hearts cry out, How long, O Lord, how long until Thou wilt deliver Thy people and establish righteousness in the earth? So we pray day by day, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth!" Should we

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grow tired of this? No; for the Lord has bidden us to continue to wish for it, to pray for it.

The Kingdom will come! And the Lord wishes us to have this thought--Thy Kingdom is coming! To give up praying would be to give up our faith. Continue to hope, continue to believe, continue to pray without ceasing! Continue to say: "Thy Kingdom come!" Continue to long for the time when that Kingdom will bless all the families of the earth. This is very different from wrestling, according to our view of the meaning of that word. This is importunity, this is persistency, this is continuance. And in everything we are to give thanks. But we would not want to hasten the Lord's time one minute. Even though we pray, "Thy Kingdom come," this does not mean that we wish to have the Kingdom come before the Father's time. But we whose eyes are anointed know

that the time will not tarry long, but that it is nigh.

Whatever may be our natural inclinations as regards constancy and definiteness in prayer, we must take our instructions from the Word of God. We must overcome our natural tendencies along this line. Let us as true, obedient children conform our views and our conduct to the words of counsel which our Father has given us. Let us remember the promise of the Master, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."--`John 16:24`.

"Breathe on us, Lord! Thy radiance pour
On all the wonders of the page
Where hidden lies the Heavenly lore
That blessed our youth and guides our age.
Grant faith, that treads the stormy deep,
If but Thy voice shall bid it come;
And zeal, that climbs the mountain steep,
To seek and bring the wanderer home.
Give strength, blest Savior; in Thy might
Illuminate our hearts, and we
Transformed into Thine image bright,
Shall teach and love and live like Thee!"

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NATURAL ISRAEL NOT HEIRS TO SPIRITUAL PROMISES

"Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded...unto this day."--`Romans 11:7,8`.

THE words of the Apostle Peter, "The Promise is unto you and to your children" (^ Acts 2:39`), are in full harmony with all of the Lord's dealings with Israel, and with His Covenant with them as the posterity of His servant Abraham. The "Seed," promised by the Lord in His Covenant with Abraham, was for many centuries supposed to mean only the natural seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob--only those who were under the Law of Moses--the Jewish nation. But there was a condition attached to this promise of heirship. When God entered into the Covenant with Israel, the understanding was that if they would keep the Law they should have everlasting life and should inherit the privilege of blessing all the families of the earth--all peoples. But that if they did not keep the Law, then they would be cut off from all these favors.

God knew that not one of Israel could keep the Law; and He had no thought that any of the natural Israelites living before our Lord's day would become members of the Body of Christ spiritual. He knew that no one could come into the Body of Christ until Jesus had first come

and opened the way. Nevertheless, it was not an empty offer that was made to the Jewish nation. God did not promise that all Israel might become members of the Spiritual Seed--the Church of Christ. He merely promised that on certain conditions they should bless all the nations of the earth. Since the Spiritual Seed was not mentioned, the natural seed were right in line for that which was specified--to be blessers of the world.

NO SPIRITUAL PROMISES BEFORE CHRIST

The keeping of the Law was required, however, that Israel might have a right to life everlasting and to share in any of God's promises. But they could not keep the Law; consequently none of them gained life. Yet there were some who manifested such heart loyalty to God that He declared that they were acceptable to Him. These faithful, obedient ones met the conditions by which they might, through the Redeemer whom God would in due time provide, become a part of the "Seed" who was to bless "all the families of the earth." As they had no knowledge of the purpose of God to have a Spiritual Seed, the attaining of a place in the natural seed to bless all mankind was all that they had hoped for. St. Paul points out that these Worthies of past ages will have a glorious place in the Kingdom. "These all died in faith, not having received the Promises,...God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."--Hebrews 11:13,40.

Jesus declared to the unfaithful Jews of His day, "Ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, and ye yourselves thrust out." (Luke 13:28.) The faithful saints who lived before Christ will be the human representatives of the Kingdom. They will be "princes in all the earth," as declared by the Lord through the Prophet David. (Psalm 45:16.) Thus they will receive a great blessing.

Until Christ came God never led the Jews to understand His Plan for the Spiritual Seed. His time for bringing this feature of His Plan to light and for calling candidates for places in this Seed class, had not yet come. Those who lived prior to this Call were not deceived in any manner nor defrauded of anything. God merely told them of the possibilities which were before them of becoming blessers of the world. Such as accepted the possibilities and rendered the Lord full obedience to the best of their ability, became heirs of the earthly phase of the Kingdom and the promises belonging thereto.

When our Lord Jesus came, His ministry and that of the Apostles up to the time of the close of the "seventy weeks" (symbolic) yet remaining of Jewish favor, was, according to God's agreement with Israel, confined to the Jewish people. And as many of them as were of the right condition of heart undoubtedly received the Message. As the Jews were the chosen people of God, because of being the natural seed of Abraham, His friend,

when the time came for calling out the Spiritual Seed the opportunity of becoming of this Seed must first go to Israel. Afterwards, the offer went to the Gentiles, to take out from them a sufficient number to complete the Spiritual Seed--the Gospel Church.

After the glorification of the Church, then will come the blessing of the earthly seed. As the chiefs of this earthly seed will be "princes in all the earth"--the Ancient Worthies--so later on, all who come in under the terms of the New Covenant will be joined to Israel and will also become the seed of Abraham. Eventually, the seed of Abraham, as foretold by the Lord, shall be "as the sands upon the seashore" for multitude. "In becoming Thy seed, shall all the families of the earth bless themselves," seems to be the literal rendering of one statement of God to Abraham in connection with the Covenant made with him. But the blessing of all will come through the Spiritual Seed, the glorified Church--Head and Body. So God's Plan seems to be one of giving more blessings to the Spiritual Seed, and less to the natural seed, though very great blessings will be the portion of all who will come into harmony with Him.

CALLED BY GOD TO HIGHEST PLACE

Natural Israel never were heirs unconditionally of any part of the Promise to Abraham nor heirs, as a nation, of the spiritual part of the Promise--the chief, the principal part. They were on trial before the Law of God, which was expressed in their Law Covenant, to see whether or not they would be worthy of eternal life. And so it was with our Lord Jesus when He was made flesh, born under the Law--subordinate to the Law. (Galatians 4:4.) It was only because He was perfect and kept the Law, that He was able in God's due time to present His body a living sacrifice as a Substitute for Adam. His faithful keeping of the Law proved His right to eternal life; and His sacrifice of that life as a man, under God's arrangement, raised Him to the highest place in the Universe next to Jehovah--the Divine plane--with authority to execute Jehovah's Program for the salvation of the world of mankind. He thus became the Head of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham.

When Jesus made His consecration, He was begotten of the Spirit. He was born of the Spirit, completed of the Spirit, in His resurrection, and He was the First born to this condition. Afterward, those Jews who were in the right condition of heart were accepted on the same terms. But instead of God's making those called to be of the Spiritual Seed actually just, perfect--as our Lord Jesus was--He justifies them by faith. Jesus was absolutely without imperfection--the Apostle Paul speaks of Him as being "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Hebrews 7:26.) God imputes to the followers of Jesus a sufficiency of His merit that they may be reckoned just--counted as perfect.

The whole object of this reckoning is to give us the privilege of becoming Spiritual Israelites by sacrificing. So the Father's arrangement is that if we desire to be the disciples of Jesus we must take up our cross and follow Him, becoming dead to the flesh, dead to self, dead to everything worldly. Then Christ becomes our Advocate. The Father accepts all such as His sons. The Apostle Paul exhorts all who have accepted the redemption that is in Christ, saying, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."--Romans 12:1`.

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND CALLED

The holiness of our offering is not of ourselves, but is ours only through the imputed virtue of the sacrifice of our Savior. All our imperfection is set aside, nullified, by His merit. And those only can become members of Spiritual Israel who offer themselves as sacrifices. As for others, if the whole world were to keep the Law they would not belong to the Spiritual Seed, for God wants only 144,000. (Revelation 14:1,3`.) So this privilege of becoming one of the Spiritual Seed was not a thing that the Jew inherited as heir to the Promise. St. Paul said that the offer was "to the Jew first." We think the Apostle meant that the Gospel Call for Spiritual Israelites was sent to the Jew first--not a command that he keep the Law, but a proclamation of the Gospel and an invitation to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The offer was first made to the Jews who were living when the Gospel privileges were opened up. If any of these were willing to enter into a Covenant of Sacrifice with Christ, He would accept them as His disciples.

The picture that God gives through the Apostle Paul in the 11th chapter of Romans represents Israel as the trunk and the branches of the olive tree, and the root of the tree as the Promise which God made to Abraham, which was to bless the world. God had not explained His Plan to them, but had merely said: "Do you wish to enter into a Covenant with Me--to be My peculiar people?" "Yes," was the answer. "When will you be ready?" "We are ready now," they replied. And so this Covenant was made, which constituted them the nation, or tree, growing out of the root of Promise. The Promise was primarily spiritual, though this fact was long kept hidden.

God never purposes to do anything except through the Spiritual Seed, but Natural Israel did not know this. They declared that they would be all that God wished them to be, if only they might have the Promise made to Abraham their Father. What it was they did not know, although they thought they knew. They were anxious

to have the best at any rate. And they still had this thought and this hope in Jesus' day; as St. Paul said: "Unto which Promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." (Acts 26:7`.) And again the Apostle says: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded"; that is, those of the Jews who came into Christ became of the Elect.--`Rom. 11:7`.

ISRAEL'S FAILURE IN THEIR TESTING TIME

What was the condition on which the Jews might inherit that blessing? It was that they would lay down their lives sacrificially. And they would be tested as to their sincerity in claiming that they would obey God in order that they might win that Promise. But the Message came to them, and they were called upon to answer the question, Will you accept Jesus of Nazareth as your Messiah, and take up your cross and follow Him? Then the test was upon them. They were brought face to face with the proposition which would prove how much they meant in their professions of loyalty to God as His special people. But the great majority failed in the testing. "They all with one consent began to make excuse." (Luke 14:18`.) When the point was reached of making a positive decision as to whether they would accept God's conditions and His way of accomplishing His Plan, but few were ready. They listened and then went, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. The cost was too much!

Those who were found in that condition of mind were none of them living up to their profession. But God did not make that Promise for nothing. When the Israelites were proven unworthy of becoming heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant, they were broken off and Gentiles were grafted in to take their places and become partakers of "the root and fatness of the olive tree." (Romans 11:17`.) Only those Jews who were desirous of doing God's will in the fullest sense of the word were allowed to remain as branches of the olive tree. Only those who accepted Christ were made heirs of the Promise, as members of the Spiritual Seed. After all the "Israelites indeed" of the natural seed were gathered in, the Message went to the Gentiles, that the full number of the Elect might be found. But the Lord tells us through the Apostle Paul, in `Romans 11`, that God's ancient people may yet be grafted into the olive tree from which they were broken off, "if they abide not still in unbelief." "And so all Israel shall be saved," after "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." O the riches of the love and goodness of God!

TAKEN LONG TIME TO DEVELOP 144,000

If all the Jews living in Jesus' day had loved God with all their heart, with all their being, with all their strength, and had made a full consecration, we understand that God would have accepted that sacrifice on their

part. We do not know how many there would have been in the Body of Christ in that event. God might have increased the number of the Elect. But as it is, it has taken a long time--nearly nineteen hundred years--to find a sufficient number to complete that Body. The Lord has limited the number of these to 144,000.

"AND SITTING DOWN, THEY WATCHED HIM THERE"

(Matthew 27:36.)

Sitting down, they watched Him there,
Watched Him, fairest of the fair,
Gazed with cold, unpitying eye,
While the jeering crowd passed by;
For His vesture cast a lot
(Seamless robe, without a spot);
Watched the "Man of Sorrows" there,
Who the world's great sin must bear;
Watched while darkness veiled the sun,
Watched until He cried, "'Tis done!"

God of Heaven! forbid that I
Thus should gaze with pitiless eye
On a suffering child of Thine,
Watch him while his foes malign,
Watch him while his life-blood flows,
Watch until the dark day's close;
Grant me, Lord, a heart of love,
Make me like a tender dove;
Let me bring him strength and peace,
Until death shall send release!

G. W. SEIBERT.

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THE SONS OF GOD

--JANUARY 23.--`ROMANS 8:12-30`.--

DIVINE SONSHIP LOST BY ADAM--JEWS NOT A HOUSE OF SONS,
BUT OF SERVANTS--CHRIST A SON--THE HEAD OF THE
HOUSE OF SONS--THE STRAIT GATE AND NARROW WAY BY
WHICH THE CALLED MAY BE ACCEPTED INTO THE FAMILY
OF GOD--EVIDENCES OF OUR BEGETTING--THE PREDESTINATION
OF THE ELECT--TO WHAT ELECTED.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,
they are the sons of God."--`Verse 14`.

TODAY we have another wonderful lesson

from the inspired Apostle St. Paul. It points out that the Church is a New Creation, begotten of the Holy Spirit, now being gestated in preparation for the glorious resurrection birth to the spirit plane. There is no more important lesson than this.

According to the Bible, Father Adam was created a son of God--in the image of God and only a little lower than the angels --on the earthly plane, instead of the Heavenly. (Psalm 8:5`.) When Adam sinned, his blessed relationship with God as a son was forfeited. Forthwith he was a sinner and under the sentence which God had foretold--not an eternal torment sentence, but a death sentence, with an accompaniment of mental, moral and physical degeneracy. There have been no human sons of God since Adam's time--except Jesus. The Jews, received by the Lord under the Law Covenant, were not a House of Sons, and never understood themselves to be sons of God. Instead, they threatened to stone Jesus to death because He declared Himself a Son of God. As St. Paul declares, "Moses was faithful as a servant over all his House [of servants], but Christ as a Son [the Head] over His own House," a House of Sons--the spirit-begotten Church.

THE HOUSE OF SONS

St. Paul points out to us that the natural man, no matter how wise or educated or talented, cannot understand and appreciate fully the deep things of the Bible, because God has caused them to be so written that only the spirit-begotten can fully comprehend them. "They are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14`.) Thus the Church of Christ is a company of regenerated beings. Once they were members of the Adamic race and, through sin, "were children of wrath, even as others." (Ephesians 2:3`.) Now they are reckoning themselves as dead to the Divine sentence upon Father Adam. They have accepted Jesus as their Redeemer, and the sacrifice of His life as the Atonement-price for their sins.

When they accept the invitation to become followers of Jesus, He becomes their Advocate with the Father; and by the arrangement of the Divine Plan His meritorious sacrifice is applicable to them as a covering for sins past and imperfections future, and affords them opportunity to be accepted of the Father, begotten of the Holy Spirit and eventually to attain joint-heirship with Himself in the Kingdom, "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."-- Verse 17`.

These regenerated, spirit-begotten children of God are not yet perfected; but if they continue in the School of Christ, the faithful will eventually reach perfection on the spirit plane as sons of God, led by the Spirit. These, on the authority of the Scriptures, exercising faith, are enabled to call upon God as their Father--"Abba, Father." Through the Word and through their own experiences

these receive the witness of the Spirit of the Lord that they are God's children and joint-heirs with Jesus--the grand perfection being dependent upon their suffering with Him. These have no obligation any longer to the flesh; for they are New Creatures. These are no longer to live after the flesh, but in harmony with the Spirit of God as revealed to them through the Word of God.

These New Creatures, sons of God, in their weakness and ignorance might ask amiss. But the Lord would not deal with them according to their imperfection of asking; He would accept the spirit of their request. The groanings and desires of our spirits, our minds, will be taken by the Lord as instead of our imperfect utterances in prayer; for God, who knoweth all things, yea, the thoughts of our minds (spirits), accepts these. All such may know that "all things work together for good to them"--because they love God--because they have been called according to His purpose.--`Verse 28`.

EXPLANATION OF THE GOSPEL CALL

`Verses 28-31` make plain to us that God has a special purpose in the special Gospel High Calling of this present Age. Other Scriptures show that this Calling of this present Age is to joint-heirship with Jesus in the Messianic Kingdom which is shortly to grant restitution blessings to all the families of the earth. To get a suitable class to be the teachers, blessers, rulers and judges of the world in the future has been the object of this Gospel Call. Jesus, the Head of the Church, was the first to respond and has been glorified and honored, and through all eternity will be honored. His followers, called during this Gospel Age, will have a similar blessing at the hands of God--glorification on the spirit plane, if faithful.

Our Study concludes with an explanation of God's Call. God foreknew, or purposed in advance, that He would have such a Church as the Apostle describes, to accomplish the work mentioned. All that was predestinated or arranged in advance. But in order to be of that predestinated and glorified class, certain things were necessary; i.e., that all those who would be finally accounted worthy of a share in the Kingdom, must be copies of God's dear Son--in heart, in character, and like Him also in the resurrection, spirit beings. This is a glorious predestination. It assures us that God will have none others in the Kingdom than those who are character-likenesses of Jesus.

Then the Apostle points out the procedure by which God has selected this predestinated or foreknown class to be copies of His Son. They were called in the sense that the Lord brought to their attention the glorious opportunity, and we may safely say that such a call was extended only to the honest-hearted who were feeling after God, desirous of knowing Him and serving Him. These called ones needed first to be justified before they could accept the call, and this justification must come through repentance and through acceptance of Jesus as

the Redeemer. It was those who accepted Jesus and were justified by Him through faith, whom God also glorified (honored) by begetting them with the Holy Spirit, bringing them into His family as children, joint-heirs with Jesus, to the privilege of suffering for the Truth and being glorified in connection with the Kingdom.

"Think it not strange, beloved,
When fiercely burns the fiery flame!
Think it not strange, but praise His name,
Who counts thee worthy to partake
Of painful sufferings for His sake.
Nor think it strange
When loved ones scornful from thee turn,
The Truth reject, the Message spurn;
Consider Him who thus endured,
And Immortality secured!"

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ST. PETER'S SERMON ON RESTITUTION

--JANUARY 30.--`ACTS 3`.--

HEALING A LAME MAN--THE APOSTLES IGNORED THEMSELVES AND ASCRIBED THE POWER AND HONOR TO JESUS--THE PEOPLE WERE IMPRESSED--ST. PETER IMPROVED THE OPPORTUNITY TO POINT OUT THE SIN COMMITTED BY THE NATION WHO CRUCIFIED JESUS, AND ALSO THE MERCY OF GOD AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE THEM AND BLESS THEM--THEY SHOULD REPENT IMMEDIATELY TO GET THE CHIEFEST BLESSING--AFTERWARD WOULD FOLLOW "TIMES OF RESTITUTION"--ALL THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF THOSE TIMES--THE CHURCH OFFICIALS WERE OFFENDED BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WERE TAUGHT THE TRUTH--CHRIST'S FAITHFUL MINISTERS WERE IMPRISONED.

"Times of Refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the Heaven must receive until the Times of Restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began."--`Verses 19-21`.

THE Apostles at Pentecost, in receiving the Holy Spirit, received not a spirit of fear, but a spirit of courage and of a sound mind. They had been commissioned by their Redeemer to preach the Gospel Message which was to gather from the Jews and from every nation a consecrated class of people to become the spirit-begotten sons of God

and eventually to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife and Joint-heir in His Kingdom.

Full of this courage, St. Peter and St. John, the leaders amongst the Apostles, went up to the Temple to pray--not because they any longer thought the Temple the proper place where prayer should be offered to God, but because they knew that it would be a good place to meet the people. Probably they expected that the Lord would there bring them in contact with the most devout Jews so as to give them an opportunity of testifying the good tidings to these.

The opportunity was soon found. They beheld a poor, lame beggar and perceived him to be a man of faith and trust in God. Looking upon him, St. Peter said, "Look on us"; and he looked, expecting to get money. But St. Peter continued, "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have, that give I unto thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." (Verse 6 .) The lame man, astonished at such an offer of blessing, made an effort to obey the command, because he had faith. As he struggled to obey, St. Peter took him by the hand and assisted him in the exercise of faith. God's blessing attended. His feet and his ankle bones, long withered, became strong; and he went with the Apostles through the Temple, holding on to them and shouting his praises to God and his acknowledgment that God's mercy had come to him through these men.

A NOTABLE RESTITUTION SERMON

A concourse of the holy Jews immediately gathered about. Now came St. Peter's opportunity for a great sermon--a witness to the Lord. He was not filled with pride and boastfulness, saying, "You may well look at us, for we are especially favored of God. None of your Scribes or Pharisees could have healed this man as we have done"; etc. St. Peter did nothing of this kind. In meekness and humility he said, Why should you look at us as though we had done anything of ourselves, or that any special holiness of ours had accomplished this miracle? We are merely the instruments of God, and this is a manifestation of God's mercy through Jesus. This miracle is done in Jesus' name--in the name of the Redeemer who has died for the sins of the world.

St. Peter proceeded to tell his hearers that the nation had wickedly crucified the Savior, but he assured them

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also of God's mercy, and declared that they might still repent and come back to God's favor, but only by renouncing their relationship with those who had done this evil deed and by taking their stand with and for the Lord. Very briefly and comprehensively he stated the Divine Plan as a reason why his hearers should consecrate themselves to God. (Verses 13-26 .) They should repent of

sins personal, as well as national, and be fully converted, or turned around--to know the Lord, to obey Him, to be followers of Jesus whom they had crucified. The result of this would be the covering of their sins by the Lord, permitting them to be accepted through Jesus as children of God; and ultimately this would mean that their sins would be blotted out completely with the glorious change of the First Resurrection--"sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown an animal body, raised a spiritual body."--`1 Corinthians 15:43,44`.

Following this blotting out of their sins and the giving to them the new bodies, free from sin and all its blemishes and imperfections, would come the glorious Times of Restitution of all things, which God had foretold through all the holy Prophets of the past. These would be Times, or years, of Refreshing, as well as of Restitution--a thousand years. Therein would be fulfilled all the promises of God to Abraham and to all the prophets and to Israel; namely, that in Messiah's glorious Kingdom the earth would be brought to Edenic conditions, "God's footstool would be made glorious." (Isaiah 60:13; `66:1`.) The curse would be rolled away, and the blessing of the Lord rolled on to humanity instead.

Any prophet that had not mentioned these Restitution years could not have been a holy Prophet, St. Peter assures us; for Restitution is the Message of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. The Master Himself, the Redeemer of the world, declares: "Behold, I make all things new." "There shall be no more curse." Eventually there shall be no more sighing or crying or dying. All things will be made new by Messiah's Kingdom, although it will require the entire thousand years for the full accomplishment of all these glorious things.

THE GREAT ANTITYPICAL MOSES

St. Peter pointed out how Moses had foretold the calling out of a special Messianic class. (Deuteronomy 18:17-19`.) Jesus is the Head of this class; and all now received into God's family by the begetting of the Holy Spirit are counted members of the Body of Christ, the Church. Moses was a type of this great Christ, and said to the fathers, "A [greater] Prophet [than I--an antitype] shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren." (Verse 22`.) God raised up Jesus first, says the Apostle; and since Pentecost He has been raising up brethren of Jesus--the Apostles first, then all the saintly characters of these past eighteen hundred years, called according to God's purpose to be the members of the Body of Christ, otherwise styled the Bride class. The full raising up of these will not be accomplished until the resurrection of the Church is completed.

When this great Antitype of Moses (Christ and the Church, His Body) shall have been lifted up, glorified, then will come the time for the blessing of the world, by the opening of the eyes of their understanding and

through all the Restitution privileges of that time. During the Millennium, whoever will hear that great Prophet may come into a great blessing of perfection, of restitution

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--physically, mentally, morally--and thus to everlasting life. But whoever rejects that great Prophet, the glorified Messiah, will be destroyed from amongst the people--will meet the fate of the intelligently wicked. "All the wicked will God destroy."--`Psalm 145:20`.

The Apostle explains that the Lord's blessing was to begin with the Israelites, the natural children of Abraham. It did gather the "Israelites indeed." Then the Jewish nation was set aside from God's favor; and the door of opportunity was thrown open to the Gentiles, who have received the Lord's blessing of opportunity for eighteen hundred years. As soon as the foreordained number of the Elect are glorified, the present Age and its objects will have ended. Then the Restitution work will begin; and Israel according to the flesh will again take first rank in Divine favor, as explained in `Romans 11:25-32`.

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OBEYING GOD RATHER THAN MEN

--FEBRUARY 6.--`ACTS 4:1-31`.--

THE COURAGE OF GOD'S SERVANTS--ST. PETER THE SPOKESMAN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN--THE WISE MEN MARVELED--THE APOSTLES IGNORANT AND UNLEARNED--NOT THE SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT OF A SOUND MIND AND OF COURAGE--TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOL OF JESUS--WONDERFUL RESULTS --WHEN TO OBEY AND WHEN TO DISOBEY.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."--`1 Corinthians 16:13`.

ST. PETER and St. John, arrested for preaching Christ as the Healer of the lame man in the Temple, were called to answer before the Jewish High Court--the Sanhedrin, composed of seventy learned Jews. These sat in a circle, and had their prisoners before them. When we remember that the Apostles were illiterate fishermen, unaccustomed to public speaking and to contact with the great and learned, we may well be amazed at their courage and at the straight-forward presentation of the Gospel given there by St. Peter. It astonished the Sanhedrin, too. They wished to arraign the Apostles, not for the good deed of healing the lame man, but rather for their preaching of Jesus.

However, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, St. Peter wisely and properly drew attention to the fact that they were on trial really for the healing of the sick. Again he disowned any power on the part of himself and his companions. Admitting that they were merely ordinary men, he credited the miracle wholly to Jesus. What a lesson is here for all who would represent the Lord as His ambassadors! As St. Paul said, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus."--`2 Corinthians 4:5`.

Under any circumstances, how courageous indeed were the Apostle's words: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole!" St. Peter was not only preaching that Jesus was not a deceiver but the real Messiah, whom the Jews had long expected, but, additionally, he was declaring that the Sanhedrin had murdered the Messiah. It was the truth; and it was necessary to utter the truth. To have evaded the point would have shown fear; and the Apostle would have failed to make a right and proper impression on the Sanhedrin and the auditors.

Some one might suggest that St. Peter did not use gentlemanly language--that he should not have made such a home-thrust at the Sanhedrin. Mr. Benson, in *The North American Review*, gives a definition of the term gentleman which seems to fit this case. We quote:

"How do you define a gentleman, then?" said the lawyer, leaning forward at a certain point of the conversation. "The gentleman, it has been said, is a man who is never offensive unintentionally," said the parson. Two of the guests murmured 'intentionally,' by way of correction; and the parson smiled. 'No,' he said, 'a gentleman is sometimes offensive when honor and reason demand it, but then he means to be. The man who is not a gentleman is often offensive when he does not mean to be.' 'But is he always a gentleman when he is intentionally offensive?' asked the lawyer. 'The gentleman is,' said the parson, with a smile."

In St. Peter's case it was not a time for quibbling. It was a time when a gentleman was in duty bound to use his opportunity, in no unkindly way, in placing the truth before his hearers. And how much St. Peter crowded into a few words, according to this record! He identified Jesus the Nazarene, the one who had been crucified, as the Messiah, the One whom God had approved, as was manifested in the raising of Him from the dead.

THE SANHEDRIN PERPLEXED

Next the Apostle quoted to them from the prophecy of David (*Psalm 118:22*), saying, "This is the Stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the Head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." If there was a

force, a sting, in these words to his hearers, it was because they were so seriously in the wrong. How fortunate it would have been for them if they had been humble-hearted, like those who heard St. Peter on the day of Pentecost! Then they also would have cried out in consternation, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" But, alas! education, honor of men, high station, often put the possessors of these at a disadvantage.

The Sanhedrin were rich, not only financially, intellectually and in honors of men, but also in education. To them forcefully belong the words of Jesus, "Woe unto you rich!"--you are at a disadvantage. Pride, honor of men, self-conceit, hinder many such from receiving the simple Message of the Gospel. Thus we perceive that

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there are compensations in the Divine arrangement, and that in some respects poverty is a blessing in disguise. Hence the assurance of the Word that not many rich, not many great, not many learned, not many noble would be among the chosen of the Lord or would receive positions in the Bride class and in the Heavenly Kingdom.--`1 Corinthians 1:26-29`.

Perceiving the boldness of St. Peter and St. John, and noting that they were unlearned and ignorant, the Sanhedrin marveled, and "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Ah, yes! of Jesus also some one had said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"--in any of our schools. (^John 7:15^.) They knew of His power with the people through the Spirit of the Lord and of His straight-forward presentation of the Truth. They recognized these men as of the same character--filled with Jesus' Spirit. And to this day this is true of the followers of Jesus. As the Apostle wrote, "God hath not given unto us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (^2 Timothy 1:7^.) All of the Lord's people should remember this

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point and should cultivate such a spirit and be copies of the Lord Jesus and of the faithful Apostles, so that of all such people might take knowledge that they have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

But let no one forget that there is only one way of coming into relationship with God--through the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Apostle indicates in this discourse, "There is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." We must have faith in Jesus. We must understand that He died for the sin of the world. We must make a personal acceptance of Him as our Savior. We must consecrate our little all to follow in His steps faithfully, even unto death. On these conditions we become His disciples; and having become disciples, learners in the School of Christ, and having been

begotten of the Holy Spirit, we are privileged to show forth more and more His praises and to let our light shine before men, that they, seeing our good works and our likeness to the Master, may glorify God on our behalf.

The Sanhedrin were perplexed as they perceived that the disciples had so strong a case, and had really turned the tables upon them, charging them before the people with being the real culprits--murderers of the Son of God, the Messiah. As they looked at the man who had been healed, they perceived a great miracle. They could say nothing. So they put forth the Apostles from their midst, that they might discuss the case privately. They could not deny the miracle, and they were afraid of what it might lead to if talk of this kind about Jesus and about their being His murderers should spread amongst the people to any degree. They thought best to let the disciples go, charging them, threatening them, not to preach any more in the name of Jesus.

COURAGE IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL

Then was shown the marvelous courage of the Apostles. They replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

The Bible directs the followers of Jesus to be subject to the powers that be. (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17.) But while seeking to be thus law-abiding in every respect, Christians are to recognize that there is a still higher Law and a still higher Ruler, and are to be subject to the worldly powers only in the absence of a contrary admonition from the Higher Power--from God.

God had commanded the disciples through Jesus that they should be God's mouthpieces to preach the Gospel Message that the death of Jesus was efficacious for the cancellation of sins; and that He who was slain was by and by to come and set up His Kingdom, and to bless the world by releasing it from the bondage of sin and death. They were also to invite all who had faith to believe this Message to associate themselves as disciples of Jesus, loyal and faithful to the Prince of that Kingdom which is not yet set up. By such faithfulness they would manifest the faith that was in them and their loyalty to God; and on account of this they were promised a share with Messiah in the Kingdom which He would establish.

It was therefore the duty of the Apostles, as it is the duty of all the followers of Jesus, to make known the Gospel Message wherever there are hearing ears, and not to fear what man may do--although it would be our duty not to offend against the laws by holding a meeting where the crowds would interfere with traffic, or otherwise be in conflict with legal regulations. The Apostles were not interfering with the regulations of the Jewish Law in speaking in public, as they did in the Temple. Their courage was really authorized by the Law; and the

Sanhedrin, in forbidding them, went beyond its bounds.

The Church, young in faith, had no doubt been greatly distressed by the imprisonment of the leading disciples; and when they were released, then a general meeting for rejoicing and praise to God was held, thanking the Lord for the courage given to the Apostles, for the promises of His Word, and for the miracle which had led up to all this. As a consequence, we read that all were so encouraged that "they spake the Word of God with boldness"; and that "with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all."

Our Golden Text, in full accord with the lesson, is properly an exhortation to all of God's people everywhere to be faithful and loyal to God and His Cause. Let us each apply it to himself: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

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THE VALUE OF MODERATION

"Let your moderation be known unto all men.
The Lord is at hand."--`Philippians 4:5`.

QUESTION.--The Apostle Paul says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men."
What is the particular thought here in the word "moderation," and what is the connection between these words and the sentence, "The Lord is at hand," which follows?

Answer.--The Spirit of the Lord is said to be a spirit of wisdom, a spirit of justice, a spirit of love, a spirit of a sound mind. Whoever, therefore, receives the Spirit of the Lord, in proportion as he receives it, has these qualities of mind and heart. At the beginning of a Christian's experience, the measure of this moderation, or reasonableness, or gentleness, is of course, comparatively small. But he gradually gets a greater appreciation of the value of this quality. His ideas become more reasonable as he becomes sanctified by the Spirit. He will have more and more of the spirit of a sound mind, of gentleness, meekness, and will become more and more prepared for the Kingdom soon to be established.

This attitude of mind comes in large measure as a result of knowledge. As he comes to know more about God and His plans, more about the origin of sin in the world, how it came about and how its penalty has passed upon all men by a process of heredity, the true disciple of Christ feels more of the spirit of moderation and acts with more consideration and charity toward others than if men were perfect. As we realize that these imperfections vary in number and in degree in different persons,

so in our dealings we must be moderate toward all, wise in our dealings with all, patient toward all, having the spirit of justice, of reasonableness, of mercy.

This injunction of the Apostle does not refer to the exercise of this quality toward the Church only, but toward all men. Properly, of course, this moderation would begin at home, and would be more particularly manifest in good works in the Church, as in opposition to the evil sentiment--anger, malice, evil-surmising, hatred, strife--works of the flesh and of the Devil. But the spirit of moderation should not be confined to the home, but should be manifested toward all with whom we have intercourse or dealings. It was said of the Apostles that people "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus and learned of Him." We should

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so live before all, both the brethren and the world, that they would thus take knowledge of us. We should see to it that our conduct is a credit to the great and noble Cause with which we are identified.

The connection between letting our moderation be known and the statement, "The Lord is at hand," seems to be that the Lord's people are to have in mind their expectation based upon the promises of God's Word, that Messiah's Kingdom is shortly to be established, and that this should help them in living an exemplary life. Whether the passage should be considered from the viewpoint that the Church of the Apostles' time were living in the latter part of the great seven-thousand-year week, and that the great Sabbath was at hand, when the Lord was about to come and set up His Kingdom and set things straight in the world, and that hence they could well be patient and considerate, or whether it should be from the viewpoint of time--that the Lord's children should exercise the grace of moderation because they had little time left in which to manifest it--we do not know. At any rate, knowing that the opposition of sin will not last very much longer, we may have the greater patience and exercise this patience with the greater ease when we have

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this thought before our minds.

The Apostle gives a similar thought when he says that the tribulations which the Lord's people undergo are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them. This should make us very moderate, very forbearing, under circumstances which would make others very rude, very angry, very immoderate. We can be very gentle, not only because of our knowledge of the nearness of the Kingdom, but also because of our knowledge of the weaknesses of others, which cause them to impinge upon our rights.

SOME INTERESTING ITEMS

PARIS BRETHREN MEET REGULARLY

Extracts from a Letter of Brother Joseph Lefevre, main Elder of the I. B. S. A. Class in Paris, France, to Brother Louis F. Ruel, of New York.--Translated.

Please, Brother Louis, openly tell our Beloved Pastor Russell, and through him all the dear brethren over there, of the cheerfulness and perfect peace which I derive daily from "My Morning Resolve" (especially the last part of it), in my long exile from my home in Denain (invaded territory), and from separation of my wife and other dear ones there. Also, the added blessing that I find, when at times my courage would fail me, in recalling the words:

"Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may,"

and then, softly repeating them, I regain greater comfort and joy! Yes; I desire of you the favor to thank the Lord for the precious help I have received from this "Resolve" counseled by the "faithful servant." I deeply appreciate the service, and must give vent to the feelings it suggests.

I do not write to the dear Pastor, because being unable to express myself properly in English, I think better to sacrifice my own satisfaction than to divert otherwise too much of his attention from the interests of the many. However, I know how much he loves also the brethren of Northern France--and these, too, know it. Therefore, daily, from every heart of our people, ascends to the Heavenly Throne a fervent prayer beseeching for Brother Russell, our Pastor, an ever-increasing measure of the Spirit of grace, wisdom and understanding. Be sure and tell him that despite the keenly hard and long trial they are undergoing, all our French brethren and sisters, whose sentiments I am here voicing, are his "glory and joy" ('1 Timothy 2:20'), by their faithfulness, faith and perseverance.

The Lord has made His Truth known here to some new hearts by my humble voice and despite my poor health. We have a class now of about forty-five, and every week new, thirsty souls come to the spring of the New Life. A number have known the beauty and privilege of consecration, and they are making large strides in spiritual progress. Nearly all the members attend the weekly testimony meeting. Three evenings during the week there are meetings (one at the other end of Paris), for Berean Studies or to discuss the Epistle to the Romans, with an average attendance of twenty.

Until lately I have had to take personal charge of all the meetings, with the preparatory study that each entailed, which fortunately could be done owing to some leisure left by my working only eight hours daily at the office [an Insurance Company]. But now the Lord has given me a competent assistant in my dear Brother Theophile Leguime [formerly a

Deacon at Denain], also physically weak, but strong in faith, who since the invasion was living with the friends at Auchel, Pas-de-Calais [a few miles from the battle front], and who has just been compelled to leave that place because the military authority became suspicious of his large correspondence with the brethren at the front and elsewhere, in the interest of the Truth and for their edification and comfort. The experience and ability of this brother will much avail, so that several things will be thus better cared for, under God's providence, answering my prayers that "He would send forth laborers into His Harvest."--`Matthew 9:38`.

SHARP P. O. CENSORSHIP

An Exchange asks: How far can a government department go in censoring printed matter committed to the mails?

Will the Postmaster-General bar the following extract from a speech made by Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany in 1891 to recruits?

"Recruits! before the altar and the servant of God, you have given me the oath of allegiance.* * * Only one enemy can exist for you--my enemy.

"With the present Socialist machinations, it may happen that I shall order you to shoot your brothers or even your parents--which God forbid--and then you are bound in duty implicitly to obey my orders!"

If the Postmaster-General permits the above to go through the mails, why should he object to the little article by Jack London, reading in part:

"Young man, the lowest aim in your life is to be a good soldier. The good soldier never tries to distinguish right from wrong. He never thinks; never reasons; he only obeys. If he is ordered to fire on his fellow citizens, on his friends, on his neighbors, on his relatives, he obeys without hesitation.

"A good soldier is a blind, heartless, soulless, murderous machine. He is not a man. He is not even a brute, for brutes kill only in self-defense. No man can fall lower than a soldier--it is a depth beneath which he cannot go."

Postmaster-General Burlison does object to the above. When it appeared on post-cards circulated by a peace society, he issued an order barring such post-cards from the mails.

THE NEXT POSSIBLE STEP.

To say that a newspaper carrying this text should be barred from the mails would be the next logical step. The distinction by the department is that such matter on a post-card is "openly displayed." In a newspaper it is not.

The censorship is based on section 212 of the criminal code, which excludes from the mails all matter which carries openly any reflection on the character or conduct of any person. The department, however, has construed this to mean any class of persons.

Leaders of the various peace societies are indignant over what they call this usurpation of power on the part of the department.

EUREKA DRAMA WORK

DEAR ONES IN CHRIST:-

With the closing of the year 1915 we find that our activity in the EUREKA DRAMA work must close also.

We have been working continually nearly all summer, showing almost every night. We traveled by wagon, and camped out, making our expenses very light; but as the cold weather came we found that the rental of halls and board and lodging were more than we could handle, so we have decided to discontinue our efforts until Spring, except in a few towns we can easily reach by rail.

We have the DRAMA on the loan plan, and would like to keep it, hoping to start again as soon as the weather permits. We completed four counties in the past year. We showed, on an average, to one hundred and fifty persons each evening, and much interest was aroused.

We did not specially encourage the signing of the cards, but merely mentioned it, and we think by so doing we received

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the names of those most interested. When we first started with the DRAMA we would pass pencils and encourage the people to sign, but we found that we could get those most interested by merely drawing their attention to the subject of the free booklet. All of us were blessed in the service and by the experiences we passed through, some of which were not the most pleasant, but we believe they were for our good.

We have shown in many churches, and on two occasions we showed on Sunday evening after the preaching service. We also found some towns bitterly opposed, and the ministers would write articles for the local papers condemning Brother R. and the DRAMA. This only helped to increase interest, and two of these articles we were privileged to answer through the same columns. We did this in as kindly a way as possible.

Please let us know if it will be all right to keep the DRAMA here and use it during the winter, as we have opportunity. If the work does not close by Spring, we hope to become active again in the service of the Truth.

Wishing you all a very happy New Year and much joy in your service for the King of kings,

Your Brother in Him, L. E. EDWARDS.

FRENCH LETTERS FROM TERRITORY INVADED
BY GERMANS

(From the French WATCH TOWER.)

I have been happy to receive word that you can again send us "LA TOUR DE GARDE" with the precious teachings of the faithful and wise servant. What a joy and comfort we find in having our eyes opened and being able to understand

the Divine Plan! The Lord is permitting evils, mourning and sufferings for a little while still, but soon He will heal every wound, wipe away all tears and reign in righteousness. This is indeed "the vision of glory presented to our faith," in which glory we shall share if we are faithful to the end. And this is the time for us to realize in part Psalm 46, and wait patiently for the fulfilment of the rest.

J. B. and J. TILMANT.--Belgium.

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Accept my best wishes for the dear family of the faith in Geneva, and especially for the brethren and sisters in THE TOWER office. Here on Sunday mornings we have Berean Bible Studies which are very useful, I can assure you, and worship in the afternoon. We frequently give an opportunity to the brethren, urging them to show what progress they have made in the study of the Word of our Heavenly Father. We also have very edifying testimony meetings. In these, twelve brethren and sisters and friends on the average, take part, and you can believe that God's blessings are much appreciated by the little class at Bruay, and we ask you to help us bring them before the Throne of the Father. The wonderful article in the July TOWER was to me a comfort and a blessing. Let our thanks go to the God of all grace for the sweet privilege He has granted us to know the Truth through the channel of him appointed! We keep on our heart every one of you, also our beloved Pastor Russell, to whom please transmit our most hearty greetings in Christ.

E. LARVENT (Department of Nord).--France.

"MY LORD AND I"

DEAR PASTOR:--Enclosed find Money Order to the amount of \$25. This is for the Lord's work in whatever way you see best. It represents my little self-denials, sometimes only a penny. I keep a box which I call The Lord's Box, and put in it whatever I can save by denying myself. What a little it is, to be sure, for all the dear Lord has given me! If I had the whole world to give it would be small in comparison.

Each morning I take the Vow and Resolve; and almost every afternoon the Lord and I come together in close communion. I take my DAWNS and Bible, and we have a glorious meeting. I am very much isolated. I have to sneak away and hide everything that belongs to the Truth. I have no fellowship with the brethren. All mail is intercepted and destroyed except my WATCH TOWER, and the Lord has wonderfully preserved that.

I have to be loving and kind to them that persecute me. Every day I am developing more and more of the blessed fruits of Christ's Spirit. What a changed being I have become! I don't know myself. Two years ago I was a most impatient, fault-finding person (professing Christ's name, too). For many years I was in the nominal church. Then I came into Christ's Church, and all is so different.

I am striving to do the best that I can, like Lot in the

midst of ungodliness. This is His will, and His will be done for me! I need your prayers, dear Brother, as I pray daily for you; and may He give you the very best place in His Kingdom; for you deserve it.

I am, Yours in Christ, -----

AN INDIAN'S ENTHUSIASM FOR THE TRUTH

ESTEEMED PASTOR RUSSELL:--

I am a Canadian, native-born Indian. A little over a year ago, while in London, Ont., a good friend of mine gave me a copy of BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY--Vol. III., No. 13--saying, "There is a lot of good, common sense reading."

I perused the pages and, thank God, from that time I was awakened to know more of the blessed Truth! I have been a Bible student all my life and I now see why I have so frequently been at loggerheads with my spiritual teachers.

I sent for more of the "B. S. M." and I thank the Lord that with these you sent me also a copy of THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES. After reading this my hope revived, for it was the very thing I had been blindly searching for in the church with which I had cast my lot.

I am so happy now that I fear not death--glory to His name! I take up my cross daily and tell my friends the blessed Truth. Of course, I find the Devil busy with his misrepresentations, but I try daily to be more like my Master and to know more of the Truth which satisfies.

It had been my one desire to see you face to face since the Truth became my stay, and I thank God that He granted my desire: I shook hands with you at the depot, London, Ont., and heard you lecture there.

In closing let me say that I am studying your series, STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, and loaning these and others of your writings to my friends, as I can spare them. I am told one of these burned the papers I gave him; but as for me, I shall die a Bible Student.

With true Christian love to you and all your helpers and all Bible students, I am SAMUEL JOHN.--Ont.

"GREAT WAS THE FALL THEREOF"

DEAR PEOPLE OF THE LORD:--

Enclosed find \$1 to cover the difference in expense on the leather-bound "Emphatic Diaglott." And whatever is left over, please use in the cause of the Lord.

We have a class for all here on Wednesday evenings. You ought to see the enthusiasm. We started out with 4; now we are over 30; and our class is only 3 months old. But the "break" in our favor came only 3 weeks ago, just at the close of a four-weeks' "revival" conducted by an "evangelist" of the "Christian Church"--the only church here. Much abuse was hurled at us during those four weeks, but we said never a word. The speaker frequently referred to me as "false teacher," "weak-minded," and "ignorant," but at the last day of his tirade his patience "busted" and he openly challenged me to a debate. I saw my call and promptly accepted.

So we hired the M. W. A. Hall for the last evening of his stay here. (It was just the right time, too--for us.) The evangelist contended that Jesus was not a created being, that Jesus' body certainly rose, and that the dead are in "conscious existence," and also that all the dead have nothing more coming to them than what they have already received. Every one in the neighborhood, including most of the cripples, came to attend what they termed "The Great Debate." The evening passed off nicely, the audience was attentive and quiet, the chairman maintaining strict order throughout.

So far as the debate is concerned, my opponent was not very well posted, and he fell down on all points with a crash. It was a sad ending of their "revival."

I am writing this hurriedly, so please overlook composition errors. You may use any or all of this letter for any purpose, if you wish.

In fellowship and Christian love, E. N. FEROE.--Wash.

"AN ECCLESIASTICAL BATTLE" BY
JUDGE J. F. RUTHERFORD.

DEAR MR. COWARD:--

I have to thank you for the copy of the vindication of Pastor Russell, which you were kind enough to send me, and which, I need hardly tell you, I read with interest, having, as you know, been to some extent prejudiced against your leader and his work.

Its perusal cannot fail to increase my interest in his writings, as each point raised by his champion carries conviction with it to any one who enters the jury-box with an open mind, as, thanks to your interview, I was prepared to do.

Again thanking you, and with best wishes for yourself and work, I am

Yours faithfully, CHAS. A. SMITH.--West Indies.

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International Bible Students Association Classes
STUDIES AND LECTURES BY MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION

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