

have us believe that the moral standard of thousands high in the churches is so low as to almost stagger reason.

"Now if what Mr. Sunday says about the denominations is true they are not fit places for good, respectful people, to say nothing of true Christians. In fact, if they are only half as bad as he says, then every faithful child of God ought to get out of them as quickly as he can.

"If they are but one-quarter as bad as Mr. Sunday tells, then the only safety on the part of one who wishes to retain his faith is to get out of such spiritual pest-holes. And we must confess that Mr. Sunday's delineation of the conditions in religious organizations is true to fact.

"This is why we are glad to take a stand independent of all denominations, and advise all who are not satisfied with the conditions prevailing in these systems to follow our example. Of course, there are many who want to know why we do not remain in the churches and try to reform them. We answer them that if all the able evangelists from Moody to Sunday have been able to accomplish so little in that direction then the case is hopeless. It is like the Bible puts it, 'We would have healed her, but she could not be healed.' The disease is incurable. That is why the denominations are DYING."

The gentleman never attempted to refute my statements, but he said, "However, you must admit there has been a great

revival in the way of Bible study in the past few years. Does that not look hopeful for the churches?"

I replied, "It is true that the past few years have seen the inauguration of several movements having for their object the encouragement of more Bible study. But do you know the real reason for their existence?"

"When Pastor Russell first began to call attention to the extent to which the Word of God was being ignored in these denominations, his views were treated with the same scant courtesy as the Bible; and it was only a question of time until the Scriptures would have been altogether neglected.

"But as the religious leaders began to see the people listening to Pastor Russell they trembled for the effect it would have on their own prestige, just as I imagine the Pharisees must have done when they found the common people listening to the words of Jesus. And in their fears the clergy realized that they must get up some kind of substitute for Bible-study to keep the mass of mankind from listening to the one who is unquestionably the religious Reformer of this century."

The poor man had nothing more to say. He probably knew it was all too true. How glad any of us would have been to have given him the same comforting light we have, but he was not yet ready for it.

Yours in the Fellowship of the Gospel of Peace,

B. H. BARTON.

FALSE REPORTS INJURIOUS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

For some time it has seemed expedient that I write you re some field observations. You may recall that I reported while South about a year ago, that a rumor was then going the rounds of that section that Rockefeller had sent you a check for a million dollars. Since reaching the territory which I have been in for the past six weeks, I have come up against a widely circulated report that you had received another million dollars, but this time from Helen Gould. Now this report is vouched for as being authentic, for it is said to have come from some one engaged in the work, recently at Brooklyn, so he knows (they think). If such reports were not so absurd they would be laughable. How any one can give credence to such reports I cannot understand.

For about the same period of time I have been hearing that Brother Bohnet had passed beyond, and that Brothers Toole and Hersee have gone out of the truth. All these things sound to me very much like "vain babbling." At Chicago I was told that the reports coming in there from various pilgrims indicate that the friends generally are going to sleep, at least resting on beds of ease.

My observations have been quite the reverse of these reports, and you know the territory covered by me during the past eighteen months has been quite extensive. The cases of drowsiness noted by me have been rare. Generally speaking I have found the classes in good spiritual health, the friends wide-awake. Probably a more vital matter is a report throughout the same territory, just referred to, that your present thought is that the church will not be gathered until 1925.

I was told that a pilgrim brother, whose name was not mentioned, had made some calculations to this effect, but before presenting them to the classes had submitted same to you and that you had returned the notes with your approval, as the story goes. So often do I find the friends forgetful of your oft-repeated statement that if you had any information to give them they might expect to find same in THE TOWER.

It seems to me that all such matters as I am repeating are worse than idle—that they are in reality harmful; for when the minds of the friends are exercised about such things they cannot be exercised about the things that would help them into the kingdom. It seemed to me that you might consider these matters of sufficient importance to warn the dear friends against them through THE TOWER.

My heart was made solemn indeed by the article in THE WATCH TOWER, "Seventy Sent Forth." The breaking of such tender ties is a great test, but we are in the testing time and cannot know what awaits us. When one member suffers, all suffer—sympathetically. Surely the end is near—all the more occasion for rejoicing. Remember me, dear Pastor, in your prayers, that I may meet you in the kingdom, even if not before. My love for you expands and grows more tender as the days pass. To my mind evidences are being multiplied to the effect that the dear Lord is still guiding you in all things pertaining to his service. Daily do I thank the Father that I am privileged to be a coworker together with you in these closing days. With abounding love and confidence,

Your brother by His kind favor,

W. M. WISDOM.

LOVE OF THE FATHER AND THE SON OUR PATTERN

(Discourse delivered by Brother Russell at the recent Convention at Oakland, Cal.)

Of the Master we are assured that at the conclusion of his earthly ministry he still dearly loved his disciples. We read, "Jesus, . . . having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." We are to draw a strict line of demarcation between the love of God which the Bible points out as applicable to all mankind, and the love of God which is conferred upon the church. In the large, broad sense of the word, the Bible assures us that "God so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." However, there was nothing in the fallen man that God could really love, in the sense of fellowshiping him. Really, there was nothing in man to draw out the love of God toward him—everything rather to the contrary. And this was the reason God sentenced man at the first, immediately after his fall, declaring Father Adam not worthy of his continued love and favor, and condemned him to death.—Genesis 3:17-19.

We are not to understand that God changed his mind meantime and concluded that, after all, he did love Adam and wished that he had not condemned him to death. Rather, we

are to understand that the love of God which he exercised toward the world is of the sympathetic love for a poor dog. If he had injured his paw, we would like to bind up that paw. We would have the sympathetic love. Not that we really loved that dog, but we had sympathy for it. So God's attitude toward the world is an attitude of sympathy. And he would have his people have a kind, generous feeling toward all men, and even toward the brute creation. In harmony with this the Apostle tells us that we are to do good to all men as we have opportunity, but especially unto them who are of the household of faith.—Galatians 6:10.

The Lord makes a definite rule. We are not to class the household of faith in with the world. We are not to think of giving the world the same affection or love or interest that we give to the household of faith. Neither does God.

The love which God has for the world is entirely different from that which the Savior mentions when he says, "The Father himself loves you." This seems to me one of the most wonderful texts of the Bible—that our great God could have a love for us—so small, so unworthy of his love or attention!

This same sentiment of the Heavenly Father is reflected in the words of our text, "Jesus having loved his own, . . . he loved them unto the end." No doubt was there. We cannot think that those who were especially his own then, those who had come to him and become his followers, were the most talented people in Jewry, any more than are his disciples today. Were they especially his own because they were so well educated? Was it because they were so refined? No. Was it because the world appreciated them and would take charge of them, or because they could be raised to responsible positions in the eyes of the world? No.

WHY JESUS LOVES HIS OWN

Why did Jesus have this special love for them?—"having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." There is something important here. You and I wish to know whether the Savior loves us. His is not merely a random love. There is a principle involved. He loved them because they were his own, but not in the selfish sense that a man would love his house and his dog and his cat, because he possessed them, because he owned them. Not in that sense did Jesus call his disciples his own. His was an unselfish love. He purposed to do something for them.

What was the reason that Jesus loved and called his disciples his own? I think you are agreed with me as to the reason. He loved them because they had those qualities of heart that would make them lovable from his standpoint. I think that those qualities are ones that you may have and I may have. You and I in thinking along this line, may see and know. I am glad the Bible says that Jesus loved his own. I am glad I am one of his own and therefore can believe that Jesus loves me, not in the merely sympathetic sense that he loves the unbelieving world, but in the special sense made manifest in our text.

The quality that made Jesus love them was, I believe, first of all, their honesty. It seems to me there is no quality more estimable in the sight of God than honesty. Should not everybody be honest? I answer, Yes. Is everybody honest? Evidently not. The honesty which these disciples manifested was that they were ready to confess that they were nothing of themselves. They could not keep the law of God. They could not think of themselves as anybody. They knew, as all Jews knew, or ought to have known, that God had given them the law as the standard. They could not keep that law. They were honest enough to confess it. Their hearts were therefore in the attitude to look for something that God had to give that would be better than the Law Covenant.—Romans 7; 8:1-4.

HYPOCRISY THE GREAT SIN

Notice the great ones, the holy, the religious ones, of the Jewish nation—the scribes and Pharisees and priests. They were claiming that they kept the law; but they were not keeping the law, as Jesus pointed out. That meant that they were deceived. They were professing to keep the law. They made broad their phylacteries. They made long prayers to be seen of men. Jesus was continually reproving them. Doubtless there were many murderers, thieves and vagabonds in Palestine; yet we notice that Jesus passed all their criminality by as insignificant as compared with hypocrisy. The most serious denunciations the Master gave were toward this class. The further you and I can get away from being religious hypocrites the better. If the whole religious community professing Christ could get away from hypocrisy, it would make a great stir in the world. There is a great deal made of certain names, indicating certain religious activities by means of these names, but the names do not match the facts in the case.

The disciples were honest, confessing themselves nobodies and confessing that they were not able to do right, not able to keep God's law; and because they thus accepted God's message, speaking peace with God and telling them that they might have forgiveness of sins through him—because they had this attitude of mind, Jesus received them as his disciples. They were glad to believe the message he had to give—that he was selecting the kingdom class, to be highly exalted to bless mankind. They left all to follow him. He had taken a similar course. He had forsaken all to do the Father's will. He had given up the glorious condition which he had with the Father before the world was. As a human being he had consecrated himself at the time of his baptism, gladly, willingly, that he might do the will of the Father. Here were some, these dear disciples of his, having noted his purity and having received his message, who were glad to walk in his steps, that they likewise might do the will of the Father. Jesus declared that each of these was his mother, his sister, his brother. There was the secret of it.

NONE SO PRECIOUS AS THE LORD'S OWN

Our Lord had received these disciples as being very closely related to himself. They were the most precious ones in all the world. They were not his natural brothers and natural sisters; but because they had the Spirit of the Father, because they had his own Spirit, they were greatly beloved. Having loved his own, he continued to love them to the end.

At the conclusion of his earthly career, you remember, at the time he was thinking about them, and thinking about leaving them, he prayed to the Father about them. He said, "I pray not for the world." He was about to die for the world; but he did not pray for the world, because the salvation of the world was not yet due, in God's plan. He prayed for those that had willingly given themselves to be his disciples and to walk in his steps. He prayed that they all might be one—not that they might all be one person; they would always be different persons, but that they might all have one spirit, one mind, one heart, one disposition, that they might all be true disciples, that they might be one with the Father.

This was his prayer for them. He said that his followers should love one another as he had loved them. This is bringing it down to you and to me. It is one thing to realize the love of the Lord Jesus for us, and it is another to realize that the Father himself loved us because we have left the world and turned our backs upon sin. You may never be able to conquer all these weaknesses of yours fully, to your dying day. The Lord judges the heart, the will. He knows whether you have turned your back upon sin. He knows whether you have given up your heart entirely to do his will, to walk humbly in the footsteps of Jesus.

"The Father himself loveth you"! What would you take, my dear brother, for what that text teaches of the love of God toward us as his children? He has a love for the world. As a God, a Creator, he has the supervision of all his creatures. God has made provision for every creature, even the sparrow. But for all who have come into this loyal attitude of mind, he has love—sympathy, and more, esteem!

"KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD"

If we know that we came into the love of God, then let us remember, as the Apostle Jude says, that we are to keep ourselves in the love of God. You say, "Are we able to keep ourselves? Did not St. John make a mistake?" No, my dear brother, he made no mistake. We must keep ourselves in the love of God. "We are not able to keep ourselves, are we?" Yes, the keeping is with you. God will never force your will. God is not now seeking those who need to be compelled. By and by, in the next age, in the Millennium, he will deal with those who need to be forced and compelled. He will deal with these that they may compare the good and its results with the evil and its results. Now the Father seeks such as worship him in spirit, drawing near to him, loving him.

It is not that we first loved him, but that he first loved us—the love we see reflected in his great plan for the uplifting of our race. And this tells us of the great God that we have. When we came into his family by surrendering our wills to him, and he begat us of his holy Spirit, we came into a precious relationship. There is nothing like it in the universe. The holy angels indeed are in God's love and favor; they never were out of it. But we who were once sinners, and who are now received back into his family, are begotten of his Spirit to the highest of all natures. How wonderful, my dear brother! I think, and so do you, that God loves us very, very much, or he would never have made such wonderful provision in the riches of his grace and in his loving kindness toward us who are in Christ Jesus. The provisions of God's grace are not only those of the future, and it is not that he will ultimately change and transform us who are now willing to will and to do his good pleasure, but we are actually being transformed today, by this love of the Father.

I believe that daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, as we think upon these things, as we consider, study out and understand the great love of God as expressed in his marvelous plan, we are getting a wonderful realization of how much "the Father himself loveth" us. But we cannot understand it fully. But the very fact that any Father would do such wonderful things for any child would imply a great deal of love.

God had love for the angels when he made them. He had love for the cherubim and the seraphim when he made them. They always will be grand characters and therefore worthy of God's love. But here is the most wonderful expression of God's love that we by faith can believe in—that God should have such love toward us who are in every way disorganized as a race. The Father looked down and beheld in this race some jewels; and he lifted these jewels up and washed them free from sin

through the merit of the Savior; and then, through their consecration, began the work of polishing these jewels and getting them ready for the mounting in effulgent glory in the resurrection morning, when he shall set these jewels in the gold of the divine nature. Surely the Father himself loveth us!

"WHAT SHALL I RENDER UNTO THE LORD?"

As the Father loves us, and as we have also the word of assurance that the Savior loves us, what now shall we do in return? What shall I render unto the Lord my God for all his benefits toward me? This is as little as we can say. If you were taken in hand by some very rich and influential person, when you were a mere waif upon the world, and if he took you into his own home and adopted you into his own family, you would say, "What a benefactor this is!" If you had a grateful heart, you would say, "All my time and influence shall go to this benefactor, to show him how much I appreciate his kindness toward me." As surely as you had a proper heart you would feel that way.

Now, then, what shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits—his love, his kindness, for the great redemption in which we share with the world, and further for the high calling which we have received to come out of the world and become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Ours is a heavenly inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away—an inheritance reserved for us who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time. All this is ours. God has fixed it so. There is no mistaking the matter. This is a new creation. Until this Gospel age there has been no sharing of his level, so to speak; but we cannot lose our way while we follow our Guide. And in proportion as you and I appreciate what God has done for us, we surely wish to do something for him.

What can we do? You look at yourself, and I look at myself; and we say truly and honestly, "We are mere bundles of imperfection. We have nothing worthy to offer to the Lord our God." But you did offer and it was accepted. You have given all you had and the Lord has received you; otherwise you would not belong to this class at all. The Father thus loves only those who have made this consecration. They are the only ones that are in the church whose names are written in heaven. You had your will to give. You gave your little all. The Father accepted you and begat you of his Spirit; and that is the reason why you are of God's elect, and that is the reason why you can realize more fully, "The Father himself loveth you."

What shall we render? The things that you are to render and I am to render are the things we consecrated to God—the very same. That was your little all and my little all. But how shall we render our all? In everything, especially in our wills, we should seek to know the Father's will. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. In other words, my dear brethren, in coming into God's family and making this covenant with the Lord, we have bound ourselves down. He did not bind us. We bound ourselves down, that we would have no will of our own in any matter, that we would do only his will.

BOND SLAVES OF CHRIST, YET FREE MEN

We cannot have what we please to wear. We are not even to eat what we please. We are not even to go where we please. We are not even permitted to think what we please. "Well," says one, "I never heard the like of such a bondage!" That is true, my dear brother. We are bond slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And shall we never get rid of this slavery?" You can stop it any minute. All who are slaves of the Lord Jesus are voluntary slaves. You came in voluntarily; and you can just as quickly renounce it all if you please. Do you wish to do so? Oh, no! It is the most blessed bondage you were ever in! Every time you have found you had to give up your own will you found you had a greater blessing in return, more than compensating. You found all things working together for good, because you were renouncing your own will and walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Precious bondage! You found how many mistakes you made when you tried to do your own will—about your clothing, your food, and everything else. You are glad to have some general direction from One who is so wise. Because of this direction, the Apostle says of this class that they have "the spirit of a sound mind."—2 Timothy 1:7.

Our minds are all imperfect and unsound. When we are guided not by our own wills but by the Lord's will, as expressed to us in his Word, then we come to have the spirit of a sound mind. And much, much blessing has it brought us! I am sure I speak the sentiments of every one here present who is a consecrated child of God.

Gradually we come to love the Lord's way. We grow in grace and in knowledge and in the love of God, so that even-

tually we come to hate the things we once loved and to love the things we once despised. Thus as the Apostle describes it, We are transformed by the renewing of our minds.—Romans 12:2.

This bondage is freedom in a very important respect. (1 Corinthians 7:22) We are getting a victory over the bondage of sin; we are more victorious daily over the bondage of the weaknesses of our flesh. But this bondage to the will of the Lord is bringing us daily blessings; and ultimately it will bring us the first, the chief resurrection, of which Jesus says, "Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection; . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6) All this will come to you and me, if we are faithful in doing the Lord's will to the extent of our ability. God never expects anybody to do beyond his ability. We are to have the glorious standard of the Lord before us, and to live as fully up to that standard as we are able. The Lord Jesus could not do more than all he was able. Being perfect he was able to do perfectly. Being imperfect we cannot do perfectly; and therefore the blood of Jesus cleanseth us, makes us clean, while we seek to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

HOW WE MAY MINISTER TO THE LORD

Here we come to another point. The Lord knew that you and I could not do anything for him. He gave us a suggestion how we might indirectly do for him. You know to what I refer. He says that we should love one another, and that in loving one another we would be expressing the love which we have for him. So the Apostle John in speaking of this same matter, from this same standpoint, says that as Christ laid down his life for us, so we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren. He does not say that we should lay down our lives for everybody—for the heathen or for the world in general. No, no. We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. That is the way it reads. The Lord knew how to have it written. We are to lay down our lives for the ones whom Jesus loved.

I have found some very dear children of God who seemingly found it much easier to do something for the world than for the church. That is not the proper sentiment. It is God first, the Lord Jesus next, the brethren next; and after that, all men as we have opportunity; and after that, the brute creation as we have opportunity. Brutes are to be neglected in favor of men, and the world are to be neglected in favor of the church. If we have his Spirit we will love his own.

When I speak in this way, do not understand me as meaning to countenance a partiality amongst Christians. There is something very broadening in the Bible, and I believe the members of the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION are more and more attaining this love which the Lord Jesus wished us to attain. It is not whether, if they are Presbyterians, we should love them as Presbyterians, or if Methodists, we should love them as Methodists, or if Lutherans, we should love them as Lutherans. The Presbyterians love the Presbyterians; the Methodists love the Methodists; the Lutherans love the Lutherans; the Mormons love the Mormons; the Spiritualists love the Spiritualists; the Masons love the Masons; and the Odd Fellows love the Odd Fellows. But in the church of Christ there are no such lines of distinction. It is not whether a man is a Mason or not a Mason, a Methodist or not a Methodist; it is whether he is the Lord's child. We are to love those who belong to God. If the Father loves him and the Savior loves him, then we too should love him. If I do not love him there is something wrong in my attitude. I am to love what the Father loves, to love what the Savior loves.

"HE THAT LOVETH GOD, LOVETH HIS BROTHER ALSO"

"Brother Russell, if you love all the brethren, you are going to love some pretty rude characters, you are going to love some very ignorant ones, you are going to love some that are not well esteemed amongst men." I cannot help it. I am going to love all who love God. You remember that the twelve apostles, except St. Paul, were all very ordinary men. You remember that when St. Peter and St. John, two of the very brightest of the twelve, were preaching in the Temple the people perceived they were unlearned and ignorant men. Think of that! The "common people" could see it. Are these the ones Jesus loved? Yes. I suppose they cracked and broke the classic Hebrew at times. This does not mean that we should love more than others those who break the English language into pieces, but we should not allow ignorance to stand between any brother or sister and our love. We should see to it that we love all who are in fellowship with our Lord.

This is the reason they are commended to our love—because they have his spirit, regardless of whether they are from the highest or the lowest ranks of society. If the Father himself has accepted them into his family, and the Father loves them,

that is reason enough for you and me that we should love them. We ought to love the brethren. How much? It is a very long step the Apostle sets before us—we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. Our commission is not to preach to the world, but merely to such as have “an ear to hear” and a desire to find God. In addressing the public we shall be sure in nearly every case to find some who are the Lord’s children, and who need assistance in the good way, or some who are feeling after God and desire to become his children. Merely to have a harangue to interest the world is no part of our mission whatever. Our commission is the gathering out of the church, the bride of Christ.

Suppose some of those who profess to be consecrated to God are very, very weak indeed every way? Very well, my dear brother, perhaps the Lord sees you are weak and that you get into trouble too. Do you not know that he has many things to overlook in you? We are to be of as little trouble to others as possible, but we are to bear with the infirmities of the weak brethren and not merely to please ourselves. Let me repeat. We are to bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, and not to please ourselves. How much that means! I trust we are learning this. I am merely pointing out what you all know, that the love of God is the fulfilling of the divine requirement, and that this love is to manifest itself toward those whom he acknowledges as his children and receives into his family. If I see that any man has God’s fellowship, I dare not deny my fellowship.

WE MUST FELLOWSHIP WHOM GOD FELLOWSHIPS

I think of a story told about a New York banker, that might illustrate the point. He was an upright man. This banker had a friend living at a distance, who, wishing to give his son a start in life, gave him a letter of introduction to the banker. He wrote, “If you can introduce my son into the business world, it will be quite a favor to me.” This wealthy man of Wall Street had very great confidence in his friend; and he perceived, when he looked at the young man, that he was a noble character. Then he thought about what he could do to get him established in business. Without comment, he said, “Come, let us take a little walk”; and they walked arm in arm down Wall street and Bond street and New street and back again to the office. The young man waited a while in nervous expectancy. Then, noting that the banker was apparently not expecting to do anything more, he said, “Is there anything you can do to introduce me?” And the banker replied, “It is not necessary. The fact that I had you on my arm and led you down these streets will be a sufficient introduction to the business men of this vicinity.” And the young man found it so.

So when God takes hold of a man, and we see him in God’s company, we know God is willing to introduce him, and it gives him a standing with you and me. He is one of the brethren, because “the Father himself loveth” him; the Father himself recognizes him as one of his family. Then you and I should be willing to do anything for him that we are able. It is the Father’s will that we should cooperate with him in assisting the brethren in every possible way. There are various trials and difficulties for these brethren that you and I know about. All the soldiers of the cross have a narrow way, a battle with the world and with the flesh and with the adversary. You and I have battles due to the fallen condition of our own flesh. What sympathy it should give us with all other soldiers in the battle! There are the two captains. All who are on the Lord’s side or who are seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus belong to our army. Whether learned or ignorant, black or white, rich or poor, it is our privilege to love our brethren.

HAST THOU LOVE? THEN SHOW IT NOW

I believe this is as good a thought as we can have as we close this convention. The Master said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20) We are now down at the end of the age, “Only waiting till the dawning is a little brighter grown,” only waiting till we pass beyond the veil, till we are joined to the Savior on the other side of the veil. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” No opportunity after that of helping the brethren! All the brethren will have been helped. They will all have passed then where they will need no help. The time when we can encourage one another, and give a helpful look, or a warm clasp of the hand, and can show our fellowship in the sufferings of the present time, is now.

I hope we are all learning more and more this lesson of love; and I hope our hearts are opening more and more widely, as we come to see the glorious character of our Father and of our Savior, and come to receive of the Master’s image, reflected in us more and more. The Apostle says that by looking on Jesus we are changed, we are transformed from glory to glory, in the present life. As we thus go on from one stage of heart

development to another, from one step of glory to another, on this side of the veil, we are making the necessary progress, and we will be ready for the great final step, the final stage, when we shall see him as he is and share his glory.

My dear brethren, do we not believe that all these things are nigh, even at the door? The Master said, “When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads and rejoice; for your deliverance draweth nigh.” Are we rejoicing properly? Are we lifting up our heads and rejoicing to tell the world the sweet old story of the Savior’s love and of God’s love? Do not tell them too much of the coming trouble. Tell them about the silver lining of the cloud. “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.”

THE WORLD WAKING UP

The most wonderful inquiries are coming in that we have ever known. People everywhere are saying, “What do these things mean? These are the things you Bible Students have been talking about for years.” They begin to “take knowledge.” They may not all give their hearts to the Lord now. The right thought to leave with the inquirer is that he should enter into a covenant with the Lord, before he can have any favors present or future. The point of every discussion and every argument, to one who is not already consecrated, is that the time is limited, and that the only proper course for anybody to take is, as the Apostle suggests, to present his body a living sacrifice, his reasonable service.

I feel that we do well to keep this always in mind. You can never get people to understand all about the doctrines. The Lord never meant anybody to understand all these things except the brethren. “To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.” They were meant for such—for you, who have come into the family of God. These things are for you to understand. When you find that people are interested, press the point about their getting into the ark of safety, getting into the family of God, getting to be members of the body of Christ, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus.

PARTING WORDS

As we leave here today, we do so with the thought that we may meet again as a convention, or perhaps we may not meet again. It is not for you or for me to be dictatorial. The Bible indicates that the Gentile Times have ended. Their kings have had their day. They have made a good showing, in many respects. Many of these governments have done wonderfully. Take the government of Germany. It seems to me that the present Emperor of Germany has done wonderful things for his nation, which forty years ago was a very stupid people. Today they have become very bright, very intelligent, very well educated people, amongst the brightest in the whole world. This came partly in connection with their militarism. They were getting lessons in reading and writing and arithmetic while learning military discipline. Much might be said in favor of all these Gentile governments, as well as against them all. Yet when they have done their best, they have done little. Have the nations been able to lift up mankind to full perfection? No. Have the doctors been able to lift up mankind? No. Would the United States ever be able to do so? No. On the contrary, with all the increasing intelligence, we see the cataclysm of dissolution and anarchy coming. But all the trouble will be as nothing in comparison with the blessings that shall come when the Sun of Righteousness is revealed. But the portal of trouble must first be passed. And it will be a very helpful experience to all the world, as they shall be brought down to the place where they will look to the Lord as their Helper. Man’s extremity will become God’s opportunity.

Then, my brethren, let us be faithful to the light God has given us. Let us live the truth every day, “showing forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.” I hear of many who have received a blessing from the daily reading of the *Vow*; others through reading the *Morning Resolve*. I believe we cannot too fully surround ourselves with helpful influences. We need to fortify. We need to get ourselves strengthened by the divine might in the inner man, that we may be able to resist those things that are contrary to us as new creatures. Let us then suggest the keeping of these resolves, and thus living near to God.

A good many also have written in about the article that appeared in *THE WATCH TOWER* lately on love. A brother wrote, “Since reading that article I have been trying to be more gentle, more kind, more considerate of others, and to practise these things; and I am finding a great blessing as I endeavor to put these principles into practise. I find it easier to be meek and kind and gentle in word and action.” I believe the Lord today would have his people do as much polishing up of their characters as possible, so that it may not be necessary for

him to give us, through disciplinary providences in our lives, the polishing we need. If we would polish ourselves, we would not need to be polished by the Lord.

Those who are putting on the graces of the Spirit, are all receiving God's special assistance, and are working together with God (2 Corinthians 6:1); for this is God's work. As the Bible says, "Ye are God's workmanship." If he works in us to will and to do, it is to do what he has given us in his Word as his will. His present purpose is the taking out from amongst mankind of a saintly class that are to share the nature of Christ and share with him the kingdom of the future, through which the world will be blessed.

We have in our office stock some vow cards—book-marks. Many of you have them, no doubt. The vow is on one side and a beautiful little poem on the other. Those who have taken this vow form the most wonderful prayer circle the church has ever known. Think of it, that approximately 15,000 have sent in their names to that effect! And we have reasons for believing that the number of those who have taken it is double this. However, at least 15,000 are praying daily for one another. You will find them in whatever part of the world you go—whether in China, or Japan, or Korea, or Colombia, or the Isthmus of Panama, or Scandinavia, or Finland, or Russia. Everywhere you will find those who have taken this vow, and who read it daily, and who remember one another in their prayers. I think that is one of the most wonderful things in the world in all the church's history. Never before were so many of God's children praying for each other.

A LETTER OF DEEP INTEREST

I have something to read to you. It is a translation of a letter. It was written in Hungarian, to a Slav brother in the United States, and was forwarded to us. A portion of the letter follows:

"A Hungarian soldier, injured on the battlefield, was returned home wounded. He was there met by some of our brethren, and later was led to diligent and earnest study of the Scriptures, and finally made his consecration to the Lord. This he symbolized last January, at the hands of our dear Brother Szabo. A few days later he was obliged to return to the front and to the trench, in Galicia. A cannon shot burned the cap from his head; earth caved in upon him. He was dug out by his comrades, and again sent to the hospital. This brought the dear brother into our midst again, but for a short time only. Presently he had to return to the firing line again.

"This time they came within 800 feet of the Russian line, and they received the command, 'A bayonet charge!' The Hungarian brother was at the end of the left wing. He sought only to protect himself from the enemy, hence endeavored merely to knock the bayonet from the hand of the Russian with whom he was confronted. Just then he observed that the Russian was endeavoring to do likewise; and instead of using his opportunity to pierce his opponent, the Russian let his bayonet fall to the ground; he was weeping. Our brother then looked at his 'enemy' closer—and he recognized a 'Cross and Crown' pin on his coat! The Russian, too, was a brother in the Lord! The Hungarian brother also wore a 'Cross and Crown' emblem—on his cap.

"The two brethren quickly clasped hands and stepped aside. Their joy was overflowing, that our Heavenly Father had permitted them to meet even on the field of the enemy! They could not understand one another's speech, but by signs they conversed, taking out their Bibles—and the Russian had the

SCRIPTURE STUDIES in his pocket with a song book, all bound in one volume, and a photo of Brother Russell. The brother then took the bayonet of the Russian brother, and gave him over as a prisoner of war; and he still remains as such in Hungary, while the Hungarian brother has now been sent to the hospital for the third time."

While there are not many rich or noble amongst the Lord's brethren, yet when it comes to telling the truth, they manage it very well!

In Germany, Great Britain, and all over Europe, our people have been conscious for years that this war was coming on. They have been writing to me and continually inquiring how they should proceed if they were drafted or went into the army. In volume six of SCRIPTURE STUDIES, the friends are instructed to avoid taking life. If they were ever drafted into the army they should go. If they could be sent to the Quartermaster's Department to take care of the food, that would be desirable, or into the hospital work. They should endeavor to get such positions. They could not be expected to do service in the way of killing. If they were obliged to go on the firing line, they could shoot over the enemy's head, if they wished.

And that is the way these brethren did; each had this same thought in mind. This letter shows the love of the brethren even on the field of battle, and in the enemy's land, with carnal weapons. It made no difference that one was a Hungarian and the other a Russian!

How different in the nominal churches! In this war Presbyterians and Methodists, Anglicans, Romanists and others, all fight. In Great Britain they have placed a kind of premium upon marriage, saying that those who marry and bring up children, ready for future wars will be helping along their country—"God's kingdom." They have a different brand of Christianity from the Bible brand. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the one who is giving this advice, may think he is doing his duty, but there is something confusing his mind.

OUR TIMES IN GOD'S HANDS

We do not know whether we who are here today shall meet again in the flesh or not. What matters it? We are fully content, either to live or to die—whatever his providence may direct in respect to us. "My times are in thy hands; my God, I wish them there"—that expresses it beautifully, does it not? We wish to have the Lord's will done in respect to the time of our change, and in respect to all we enjoy together daily—it is all committed to him. Our wills are entirely dead. His will is to rule in your body and in mine, and in all of us. I hope, dear brethren, that a great blessing has come to the classes of Oakland, San Francisco, Alameda and surrounding classes, from this convention. I hope that as they go to their homes with their hearts overflowing with the comfort of the truth, they will carry blessings on to others; and that, like the widow's cruse of oil, the more they give away, the more they will have left for themselves.

Let us all here who have been enjoying the favors of the Lord go forth filled with the Spirit, filled with love and loyalty and fidelity to the Lord, that we may carry blessings to others. I shall be going on my way shortly, up along the Coast, as far as British Columbia, then eastward, and finally back to Brooklyn, and July 4th shall be at the New York City Temple. Let our great prayer circle draw us each nearer to the other, that thus we may be sanctified with the truth and "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

QUESTION MEETING—OAKLAND CONVENTION

(Conducted by Brother Russell)

Question.—Do we, the church, receive our full share in the anointing instantly or gradually?

Answer.—The expression, "anointing of the Spirit," is slightly different from the expression, "begetting of the Spirit." The thought connected with the word "begetting" is that of an instantaneous work, while the thought connected with "anointing" is a more gradual work. We are under the process of anointing from the time we enter the Lord's family, from the time we are recognized as members of the family of Christ, and receive a place in the glorious company of royal priests. We know that some fail to get their full anointing. Some of those who have been properly received, and begotten of the holy Spirit, will fail to be fully anointed, and therefore will fail to be of the royal priesthood class. They will be of the great company class instead. We therefore think that the expression, "anointing of the Spirit," must include that mollifying and mellowing development which comes as we grow in grace and in knowledge, and not merely the time when we were anointed (begotten) to come into the family of God.

CHANGE OF FEET-MEMBERS ONE BY ONE

Question.—Is there any Scripture which shows that the feet-members of Christ will all be changed at one time?

Answer.—We believe to the contrary—that instead of all the feet-members being changed at one time, it will be a gradual work. One may be changed tonight, another tomorrow, etc.; and yet their change may be said to be all at one time in the sense that it is all in the harvest time, all in the end of the age. The change of some will be in the close of the harvest period. As an individual matter, it will be one person after another. The Apostle says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed"; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Our change will be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." It will not be a gradual change to the individual, but an instantaneous change. Instead of sleeping, as the saints of the past have done, when our time comes to die, ours will be an instantaneous change. The Psalmist prophetically says, "I have said, ye are gods, and all of you children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men"; and this Scrip-

ture we understand to refer to the dying process that comes to all of the church, the same as to mankind in general. We are new creatures, and hence the expression that we shall "die like men." As men die, so we will die. Men do not generally die in bunches; so we would think it strange if many of us should die at one time. The world will not discern any difference between our death and the death of other men.

SIN-OFFERING MADE BY HIGH PRIEST

Question.—For what sins do the church suffer?

Answer.—The members of the church suffer for any sins of the flesh they do not properly repent of and properly make amends for. The Apostle says that if we would judge ourselves, if we would punish ourselves, correct ourselves, we would not be judged of the Lord. If we would thoroughly attend to these matters ourselves, we would not need to be chastened by the Lord. When he finds it necessary to deal with us, it is that we may not be condemned with the world.

The whole world is in a condemned condition. God is choosing some who will be justified to life everlasting on the spirit plane. If we are faithful it will not be necessary for the Lord to punish us, but rather to encourage and help us. This would not mean that we shall not have trials and difficulties, but it does mean that if we chasten ourselves we shall not be punished by the Lord for our sins, for the weaknesses of our flesh which we might have avoided, and for which we are to some extent responsible.

We are not to suppose that a new creature would sin wilfully. If he thus sinned, he would be no longer a new creature. He would have gone back, like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. The sins that the new creature would suffer for would be those sins of the flesh which he might have avoided, and which he failed to correct. These sufferings would give him a sharper appreciation of his duties; they would be disciplining for his good.

But this may not be the thought of the questioner. He may mean, "What has the church to do with the sin-offering?" The church has nothing to do with the sin-offering, as a church. It is the Lord Jesus who is the responsible one in the whole matter. In the type it was not the under priests that did the offering, but the high priest. So it was the Lord Jesus that offered up himself. He offers us up as his members, but he does not do this contrary to our wills. We desire that he will offer us up as parts of himself, that we may thus have a share in "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow." It is his merit alone that gives virtue to our sacrifice.

The whole responsibility, therefore, is in the hands of the great High Priest, our Lord. We share with him in the world's sin-offering, as his members. We participate in the sufferings which are counted as his sufferings. You and I could not atone for sins by our sufferings—either for our own sins or for those of others. That is all in the Lord's hands.

CHRISTIANS' SUFFERING DIVINELY SUPERVISED

Question.—Do the sufferings that we experienced before coming into present truth benefit us as Christians?

Answer.—I do not know what the questioner had in mind. The question seems to imply that he refers to a class already Christians. If that is his thought, and he refers to the sufferings we have as Christians before we receive the light of present truth, I would say, "Yes." All the sufferings of a Christian are under divine supervision, and many of us, I believe, before coming into present truth, had certain experiences of trials and difficulties that worked out for us a great blessing, and prepared us to receive the truth. I have known many who have given me their experiences along this line. They were so engrossed in business that they would not have taken the time to study the truth.

I knew a gentleman in the grocery business, for instance. He was a Christian, and had purchased the six volumes of the *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*. But he could not take time to study them. He did not realize that the greatest business in the world is the Lord's business. The grocery business was his greatest business for the time being. The Lord very graciously let him break his leg. He had to remain quiet until the bones were knit. He told me afterwards that his enforced vacation was the best time in his life; for he read the six volumes. Before that he had never had time; after that he always had time.

It was the same with a certain sister. This sister said to me one day, "I wondered at one time very much why the Lord let my hands get all crippled up with rheumatism. I had always been very active up to that time, knitting or sewing or doing something else. Then my hands became all knotted up with rheumatism, as you see them. I could not sew or knit or do anything else; my hands were useless. Finally, I found that, by trying, I could manage to turn over the leaves of a book; and I began to read. After reading awhile, the thought came

to me, God let your hands twist up like that so you could read."

These are some of the ways in which various ones of the Lord's people were blessed and helped to come into present truth. God has a way of dealing with his children. If we are his, then the next thing is to be fully submissive to his will and to be glad to follow his providences.

Question.—Is it manifesting the spirit of Babylon to have the Photo-Drama of Creation exhibited in a theater after the theater manager has just shown his regular production?

Answer.—It would not seem that way to me. If so it would be wrong to talk to a man about the truth after he had been hearing some bad talk. This would seem like reasoning in a circle. Each one has a right, however, to use his own judgment. If any of you are in the Photo-Drama work, do not do anything to hurt your conscience. As for me, I would be glad to show the Drama to 5,000 after they had attended a regular theater, if I had the opportunity.

PROPER AND IMPROPER ADVERTISING

Question.—Is it showing the spirit of Babylon to solicit advertising contracts from merchants for space on Photo-Drama announcements?

Answer.—It would not be proper to say to a merchant, "Advertise with us and thus contribute something to a good cause." That would not do. It would be begging for the Lord's cause, a thing we are not authorized to do. But if I were a merchant and had an opportunity to put an advertisement into a Photo-Drama announcement, I would think it would be one of the best chances of advertising I ever had. I would think I was receiving a benefit. If for \$1 or \$2 I could have my business card circulated all over the neighborhood, I would say, "These little leaflets showing about the Drama will interest the people; and while reading the notes about the pictures, they will also read about my business." I would think I had good value for my money. If any man thought that he was not getting good value he ought not to put his advertisement in. It is a purely business transaction.

In soliciting the advertisement, one should not mention the religious feature. We do not do this at all. It is purely business, so far as the merchants are concerned; and I would let them advertise all that they choose. The fact that we do not permit advertisements in *THE WATCH TOWER* does not signify that to do so would be wrong. I see nothing wrong in a merchant's advertising his wares. If I were publishing a daily newspaper, I would expect to sell advertising space.

A brother who owns a newspaper consulted me a little about his advertising. He said that the merchants in his vicinity were accustomed to advertise, and that some of the best advertisers were dealers in liquor and tobacco. I told him that I would not put any liquor advertisements in. I would put in advertisements of shoes or clothing or groceries or hardware, and would solicit such advertising, if I were running a newspaper. I see nothing wrong in advertisements or in newspapers. I would see nothing wrong in putting six or eight pages of advertisements into *THE WATCH TOWER* if the articles advertised were staples that every one wanted to buy. But since *THE WATCH TOWER* goes into the home and represents me in a special way, I like to have all the space used for religious matter—not, however, because the advertisements would be wrong.

Once we put into *THE WATCH TOWER* a notice about Miracle Wheat. Many of you saw it. We believe we did right in putting that notice in. We also put in a notice about some kind of beans and one about some special cotton. Some of the friends were benefited by each of these notices. We also put in a notice recently about a cure for cancer. We have had hundreds of letters come in from truth friends, and hundreds from others; and a great many have reported good results. To some extent this has helped forward the truth. People saw that we were not trying to get their money, saw that we were trying to do them good, and became interested.

Question.—Is it showing the spirit of Babylon to co-operate in methods promulgated from I. B. S. A. headquarters, Brooklyn, without closely scrutinizing those methods?

Answer.—I would think that each one would have to use his own judgment about this matter. If anybody had been very badly "stung," he should be very much on his guard. If he had not been "stung," he would properly not be so much on his guard. It is quite right to use your own judgment about the matter. So far as the headquarters at Brooklyn is concerned, and my own identification with the work there, let me say: everything is under my supervision. Nothing emanates from there contrary to my conscience. But you must use your consciences. While there are many wise and capable brethren at the Brooklyn office, yet by present arrangement they are my assistants under my general supervision as long as I live. That was the arrangement made when I turned my property over to

the Society, years ago. This applies also to the Society's work in foreign lands.

TRUE DEFINITION OF BABYLON

Question.—If the I. B. S. A. headquarters should promulgate methods not understood or approved by us are we to apply Rev. 18:4, "Come out of her, my people," and if so, how?

Answer.—I think if the I. B. S. A. can be shown to be a section of Babylon, we all ought to get out of it. If we all get out on the same side, where shall we be then? I think we shall be pretty close together if all get out on the same side.

The word "Babylon" signifies "confusion," and in Revelation 18:4, it is used in reference to mixing the things of God and of men. There was a time when, throughout Europe, the kingdoms came very much under the influence of the Roman Catholic church. To some extent those kingdoms came under the influence of Christianity—to the extent that there was Christianity in the Roman Catholic church.

It is well to emphasize that there was a time when the Roman Catholic church was the only church in the world, and when people knew no better than to be in it and of it. Where would they have been, otherwise? Then there came a time when the church officials, those who were high in the church management, succeeded in coming into affiliation with the Roman Empire; and the Roman church became its successor. Then the church of Rome began to sway the nations and to tell the people of this or that principality, "Your king is not in harmony with us. You can select another one." Then there would be a revolution. The Pope and the Catholic church were back of these changes. That is the way it began. There is where the illicit marriage of the nominal church and the world took place.

In many European nations this has now been gradually changed. In some the church and the state are completely separated. But this change has not been made in Austro-Hungary. The people are strictly under the control of the Roman Catholic church. The church has to do with everything. In Great Britain, the representatives of the church of England sit in Parliament, as part of the Government. The church bishops are members of the House of Lords. In Germany and Sweden, it is very much the same. Their government and God's government are lined together in the minds of the people.

This state of things God calls Babylon—the professed church of Christ being married to worldly governments. These have been called Christian governments by mistake. They are not Christian. Look at present conditions in Europe. The governments at war are not manifesting the Spirit of Christ. There are Christians in all these governments, but the governments themselves are not Christian. The nominal church has been responsible for this state of things. The situation has so warped men's minds that they think their present course the right one. They think that Christ is now reigning. In their minds the reigning king and the parliament represent God on earth. The Lord would have us separate from all this.

There is another way in which the spirit of Babylon manifests itself; as, for instance, in the Protestant churches—Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, etc. They pander to the worldly spirit. They take note of the rich, trying to work in with the rich and get the rich into positions in the church. Thus they recognize money above spirituality. In many cases money runs the church. That is not the basis under which the true church operates. There is a system in connection with all of them, even in the Baptist church, the most liberal of all.

The Baptists will say, "We are in no bondage; we have no ecclesiastical control at all." They do not realize that the spirit of Babylon has gotten into the church. Suppose we have here a congregation of Baptists. As a congregation they call their own minister and attend to their own affairs. A certain minister, then, Brother A., is called to serve them. But he must be ordained as pastor of this congregation. So they send for some other Baptist ministers—say Brother B., Brother C., and Brother D. to ordain him. But Brother A. does not stand in very well with the ministers called to do the ordaining. So they say, "We will not ordain Brother A.; he is irregular." And the congregation ask, "You cannot ordain him?" Then they reply, "We have nothing at all against Brother A., but we will not ordain him." So you see the preachers have the rule, and the people do not know it.

The Baptists will tell you that the preachers have no authority at all. But the Baptists cannot do a thing without the consent of the preachers; this they do not seem to know. The preachers hold a power that God did not repose there. God never authorized any men to go and ordain another man to preach the Gospel. God does the ordaining; and it is for the church to decide, according to its best judgment, whom the Lord ordains or calls as a pastor. All this ordination by men

is Babylonish, a species of machinery to manage the people. It is all worked just like politics.

Nevertheless the Baptists are the nearest free, of all so-called "orthodox" sects. The people in the Methodist church have almost no liberty, except the privilege of giving money. That is the principal liberty they enjoy. The bishops rule in co-operation with the presiding elders. At each annual conference the presiding elder and the bishop have it fixed what minister is to go here and what one there. The minister that does not stand by the presiding elder will go to the country place which pays only \$400; while the one who does stand by him, though no more capable, will be sent to a place that pays \$1,000 or more. I have had several Methodist ministers tell me this. They complain about it, but do not want to get out of a job altogether. That is not the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. I realize that this is a system. Let me show you what a system it is. The bishops control the presiding elders, and under them the presiding elders control the preachers; and so it is all the way down to the class leaders. They have their head or chief amongst them. They have a human head. The General Conference is the highest authority.

So the Presbyterian church has a head in the way of a General Assembly which has the deciding of matters. All this is according to the course of this world. The simplicity of Christ is not generally observed, except amongst the friends of the International Bible Students Association. There it is very general, and the Word of God is observed. They learn to take notice when things are going wrong. The simplicity of the matter is evident to all.

On one occasion I was called upon by a minister of the Reformed church. He wanted to know how I managed my church. I said to him, "Brother ——— I have no church." He said, "You know what I mean." I answered, "I want you to know what I mean too. We claim that there is only one church. If you belong to that church, you belong to our church." He looked at me in surprise. Then he said, "You have an organization; how many members are there?" I replied, "I cannot tell; we do not keep any membership rolls." "You do not keep any list of the membership?" "No. We do not keep any list; their names are written in heaven." He asked, "How do you have your election?" I said, "We announce an election; and any or all of God's people, who are consecrated and are accustomed to meet with this company, or congregation, may have the privilege of expressing their judgment of who would be the Lord's preference for elders and deacons of the congregation." "Well," he said, "that is simplicity itself." I then added, "We pay no salaries; there is nothing to make people quarrel. We never take up a collection." "How do you get the money?" he asked. I replied, "Now, Dr. ———, if I tell you what is the simplest truth you will hardly be able to believe it. When people get interested in this way, they find no basket placed under their nose. But they see there are expenses. They say to themselves, 'This hall costs something, and I see that free lunch is served between meetings, for those living at some distance. How can I get a little money into this thing, anyway?' " He looked at me as if he thought, "What do you take me for—a greenhorn?" I said, "Now, Dr. ———, I am telling you the plain truth. They do ask me this very question, 'How can I get a little money into this cause?' When one gets a blessing and has any means, he wants to use it for the Lord. If he has no means, why should we prod him for it?"

There would be nothing to come out of, as an organization, if one is an International Bible Student. You cannot get out of anything you have not gone into. If any one can tell me how he got into Babylon by getting interested in the affairs of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, let him show me how he will jump out, and I will jump with him.

ISRAEL'S PRIESTS DIED TYPICALLY

Question.—Please explain Hebrews 9:27: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Answer.—This is explained better, perhaps, in the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES than I can take time to explain it here. It is difficult to explain a matter like this in three to five minutes, because the whole thought has gotten into people's heads upside down and back end first. They all think it refers to the time when people die. The Apostle Paul, in that statement in Hebrews, is giving a lesson on type and antitype. He is comparing the work of the Jewish priests every year with the work of Christ, and telling how these earthly priests went into the Holy, and afterwards into the Most Holy. The priest took with him the blood of a bullock, then of a goat. He went into the Holy; and, after the cloud of incense had passed through the second veil and covered the Mercy-Seat, he went into the Most Holy, representing heaven itself.

The antitype is that our Lord Jesus offered up himself as

the bullock. The bullock represented Jesus as a man; the goat represented the human nature of the church. As High Priest, Jesus slew the bullock; at baptism he offered the sacrifice of his humanity. The typical priest took his two hands full of incense and crumbled it in the fire on the incense altar—that represented the three and one-half years of our Lord's ministry. This picture of the incense falling upon the fire represented the glorious qualities of Jesus as He came in contact with the trials of life. In every case His faithfulness yielded a sweet perfume.

When Satan came to Him with temptations, His loyalty was an offering of sweet odor to God. When he had the suggestion come to Him to avoid giving what He had agreed to give, He put temptation away and would have nothing to do with it. "The cup that My Father hath poured for Me shall I not drink it?" was ever His sentiment. The sweet incense went before Him and appeared in the presence of God before He finished His course at Calvary. His death upon the cross was the last crumb of incense falling unto the fire, in the antitype. Then our High Priest went under the veil—into death. He was parts of three days under the veil, arising on the other side of the veil on the third day. This was the resurrection of Jesus. He arose on the spirit side of the veil, a spirit being. Then forty days later, He sprinkled upon the Mercy-Seat in the Most Holy, in heaven, the blood of Atonement on behalf of the church.

The Apostle here is trying to get the Church to see that the Jewish high priest did something of this kind in type. The Jewish high priest went into the Most Holy of the Tabernacle, not without blood. That blood, in every case, represented the blood of the high priest—his life. Every high priest, when he passed under that veil on the Day of Atonement, was in danger of being stricken dead. If he had not done perfectly, according to the requirements of the Lord, he would have died as he attempted to pass that veil, under that curtain. And so it would have been death to Jesus if He had not done perfectly the will of the Father.

Then the Apostle declares, "It is appointed unto men [men—priests—get the thought] once to die [typically, in passing under the veil] and after that the judgment," or decision. They typified their death in the sacrifice of the bullock, and carrying its blood under the veil. If the priest had not done it perfectly, he died. The bullock represented the priest. After he had sacrificed it he passed with its blood under the second veil. "After death the judgment." There is no reference here to the death of mankind, but merely to these priests offering their sacrifice. Jesus died, passed the second veil, and was raised on the third day. After the high priest in the type had made his offering, and had passed beyond the second veil, and sprinkled the blood upon the Mercy-Seat, he came out and blessed the people.

Our Lord Jesus, the great High Priest, has not yet come out to bless the people. The antitype is a very large thing. Jesus went under the veil into the Heavenly Holy over eighteen hundred years ago. He has not yet appeared for the blessing of the world. But "To those that look for him, He shall appear a second time, not as a Sin-Offering, but unto salvation." This is the best I can do on this question in the limited time I can give here.

Question.—Does not the attainment of the Divine nature mean attainment to the image of God in which man in the beginning was created? Does not the word nature here have the significance of disposition, character?

Answer.—It does not! Man never had the Divine nature. The Apostle Paul points out, in discussing this subject of natures, in connection with the resurrection, that there is one flesh of fish, another of beasts, another of birds, and another of men. The fish does not have the same kind of flesh the bird has. We all know the difference. The flesh of fish, and of birds, and of beasts, is all different.

Then comes man, the highest of all the earthly beings. The Apostle also calls our attention to higher forms of existence; he calls our attention to another plane of life. He shows that man, the highest of the earthly creatures, is lower than the lowest of the spiritual beings. He tells us about angels, principalities, powers, and the divine nature, the highest of all. The perfect human being is God manifest in the flesh. It is as close to divine nature as the flesh could come. It represents the divine nature as nearly as is possible for a human being. The angels are also in God's image or likeness; the cherubim and seraphim as well, though on a higher scale than man. The highest of all is the divine nature. That nature only God had originally. And that kind of spirit nature which God has he gave to Jesus at his resurrection, as a reward for his faithfulness. Jesus did not have it before he became a man; but as the Father has inherent life, i. e. life in himself, not a life derived from food and water, "So hath he given to the Son to have

life in Himself." We cannot understand that kind of life. I cannot imagine how God could give a life that has no need of anything to sustain it. You never had any experience along that line. I never had. We would have been as great as God is to fully comprehend him.

We see the difference between apprehending and comprehending. To comprehend is to take in fully. To apprehend is to touch or lay hold upon. You and I can apprehend, or lay hold of God, but not very clearly, because we are so little and he is so great. We cannot comprehend God. We can simply touch him, or apprehend him.

The Apostle dwelt upon this matter; he was apprehending, or touching God, as God had apprehended or touched him. God has laid hold of us, come in touch with us. We do not come in touch with God and say, "We will have him for our God." He laid hold upon us and told us about his arrangement for us. We were responsive to it; we thought how wonderful that he would thus take notice of us. So we are seeking to apprehend that for which we are apprehended of God. Man was not created in God's image in the sense that he is of the Divine nature, which is far above cherubim and seraphim, while man is a little lower than even angels.

Question.—Cannot Revelation 7:9-17 be applied to the saved world of mankind, rather than to a Great Company class? Is there not a very serious danger in teaching that there is to be a Great Company on the spirit plane, and that those who lack a thorough appreciation of the High Calling, and a consecration thereto, will be saved notwithstanding?

Answer.—It would be very dangerous for any person who does not see a thing to presume to teach it. The questioner evidently does not understand this subject, and that cuts the answer short. When we leave a subject as the Lord puts it, we have it right. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my Word, let him speak My Word faithfully." "We speak that we do know." This is the privilege that we intend to have until we die. It is not?

"IT WILL SURELY COME—IT WILL NOT TARRY"

Question.—What does Habakkuk 2:3 mean? "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it; for it will surely come; it will not tarry."

Answer.—This is explained on the first page of every issue of THE WATCH TOWER. God has provided in his Word a great vision, a great revelation. It is a picture, so to speak. He has given this picture of his plan more or less clearly through the prophets and through the law. The Jubilees prefigured Restitution to all the world. Other features of the Law, such as the Atonement Day sacrifices, etc., pictured other features of God's Plan. The Passover represented still other parts. These pictures were all harmonized into one great picture, or view—God's great plan to bless the world. "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," God declared to Abraham. All this went to make up the great vision, or picture, that God purposed to give his people.

In proportion as we come to have the mind of God, we can understand more and more clearly what these things mean. The most important part of the picture was that Messiah would come, and that he would set up his kingdom. All of these promises would be parts of that great view, or vision. Its fulfilment would seem to tarry long. Does it seem as though God had forgotten that promise to Abraham? the Prophet seems to query. It has sometimes seemed as though God had forgotten it. "But," declares the Prophet, "it will surely come; it will not tarry." It does not really tarry. There might be various times when we would expect to see more than we do see. We may have expected to see more of the trouble upon the world before this. The year 1915 is now more than half gone, and I think it very doubtful whether we shall see all we had expected in this year. It looks as though we were trying to hasten the fulfilment of the vision.

But the vision is still for an appointed time; and we are not to give it up. We trust ourselves to God's arrangement. It was not the Lord's way to have everything go off in October, 1914. I do not know how much may yet happen between now and October, 1915. If I were to give a guess, I would not be able to see how our expectations could all be realized between now and October, 1915. I hope they will. I shall wait longer than October, if necessary. The vision is sure. All these blessed things are positively certain to come; it is simply a matter of his time and of our understanding of his time. When you and I have fully grasped the main features of all this matter, we are surely close to it. It was a very close hit that this time of trouble began near October, 1914, and it is going on now at high speed. None of the prayers that it may stop are being answered. If the time of the world war had been merely a guess, it would certainly have been a great hit. It would have

been a miracle. We have come very close to it, if not exactly.

Question.—Pastor Russell says, "The children of Israel's journey through the wilderness toward the land of Canaan was typical of the Christian's journey through this world of sin toward the Heavenly Canaan." Typical Israel did all their fighting after they got into the land of Canaan. Where is the antitypical Canaan, and what are the antitypical Canaanites, and how are they fought by antitypical Israel.

Answer.—The Apostle Paul intimates that this whole matter of Israel's history was typical of the experience of Christians. (1 Corinthians 10:11, margin) But we need to be very cautious; for in some instances we are leaning, in a certain degree, to our own judgment. But my thought would be that this traveling toward Canaan typifies the attempt to enter into a proper relationship with God. Israel did not enter into Canaan as quickly as they might have done. If they had had proper faith they might have entered in very soon. They might at once have gone from Mount Sinai into the land of Canaan, and had God's blessing with them. They did not go in because of unbelief. So any of us who wandered

through the wilderness state before coming into the family of God did so, not because it was necessary, but because we did not exercise sufficient faith. We did not need to wait forty years, or any period of time, but could have come quickly; by consecration we could have entered in at once.

But the majority were delayed. Like the Jews they did not enter in quickly. Instead of promptly entering into the blessings they might have had through the exercise of more faith, many wandered around many years. Joshua there represented Jesus, in type. The sooner the Jews would recognize Joshua and his leadership, the sooner would he cross Jordan and enter the land of Canaan. So the sooner we recognized that the Law could accomplish nothing for us, the sooner we ourselves, under Joshua (Jesus) got into Canaan. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, then began the wars with the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. These represent the weaknesses of our human nature that we are to battle against and overcome, that we may take possession of the whole Land of Promise, the privileges we have as the children of God.

POLITICIANS AND FALSE RELIGION

AUGUST 15.—1 KINGS 12:25-33.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF POLITICS AND RELIGION—THE REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES A GREAT MISTAKE—JEROBOAM'S POLITICAL WISDOM—GOD'S DEALINGS WITH TYPICAL ISRAEL—THE JEWISH REMNANT IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH—THE DIVINE PLAN DID NOT FAIL—SPECIAL THOUGHTS FOR THE PEOPLE TODAY.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."—Exodus 20:4, 5.

Jeroboam was not a bad man in the sense of sympathizing with viciousness and crime, nor in the sense of wishing to bring his people into slavery. On the contrary, he was a man of courage and love of liberty, who desired to deliver his people from what he considered to be oppression in connection with the new king Rehoboam, Solomon's successor. Under his leadership, the ten tribes of Israel revolted from the House of David and established themselves as a separate kingdom, with the avowed object of being free from the oppressions of the kings.

In many respects this would seem to have been a noble procedure; but it was a great mistake, as is every move which ignores God and his arrangements. The divine arrangement for the nation was that its affairs were all to be under God's care as God's kingdom, with the family of David as God's representatives. Under these conditions the religious interests had gradually gathered more and more about the vicinity of the Temple of Jerusalem. The more religious of the people liked to be near it, especially as it was obligatory under the law that they should go up there to worship at least once or twice a year.

Whatever were the good thoughts of Jeroboam respecting the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people, he quickly manifested the spirit of a politician. He reasoned that the going of the people to Jerusalem to worship yearly would mean that sooner or later they would again be drawn back to the kings of the line of David; and that in order to preserve his own power he must break off the religious connections with Jerusalem by establishing a new religious cult.

Two golden calves were prepared, the one located in the northern part of the territory, and the other towards the southern part, that thus the people might have the general thought that worship and sacrifice could be performed at one place as well as at another. Moreover, he arranged for religious festivals, at times different by about a month from the times of celebrations at Jerusalem. This was skilful political wisdom of the kind which would appeal to the majority of rulers not deeply imbued with faith in God. Alas, it seems too true that much of the religion of the masses is but a form of godliness anyway! That King Jeroboam was not very different from the people whom he ruled is manifest by the fact that they readily fell in with his plan, and that it was successful.

WERE GOD'S PLANS DEFEATED?

Many might be inclined to say that God's plans were thus defeated by an ordinary man; but the Scriptures show us that the very opposite was the case—that God's plans were forwarded by this opposition of Jeroboam. Let us see what God's plan is.

God accepted Israel as the typical people of his favor. He had made the promise to Abraham that through his posterity ultimately all the world should be blessed, which implied great exaltation to Abraham's posterity of the line of Isaac. Four hundred years elapsed before any movement was made in this direction. By that time Israel was numerous and in bondage in Egypt, and God sent word to them through Moses that if they were so minded he was ready to fulfil to them the promise made to Abraham.

They rejoiced greatly and followed Moses to Mount Sinai, where the Lord entered into a covenant with them, that if they would keep his law perfectly he would give them everlasting life and qualify them to be the seed of Abraham who would inherit the promise of qualification for blessing the world. They entered the covenant, but like all imperfect men were unable to keep the law—unworthy therefore of everlasting life, and of being the favored seed of Abraham to bless others.

Later on, when they were discouraged, God promised to send them Messiah, whose kingdom would bless them and afford them an opportunity of sharing in the promise made to Abraham. God's dealings with Israel, therefore, were of a typical character. Their Atonement Day, their law, their mediator, their sacrifices, all typified better sacrifices, etc., under a better Mediator, Christ. The entire dealing of God with Israel was with a view to raising them up out of the fallen condition to as high a standard as possible for them, that thus they might be prepared, when Messiah would come, to be associated with him in his kingdom, as his bride class. Let us see how this fits in with God's dealings in this lesson.

The defection of Jeroboam and the majority of the nation had the effect of separating from the ten tribes, and of driving into the territory of the two tribes, the most faithful and loyal of the Israelites. To these the idolatries established by Jeroboam were properly repulsive. They were willing to forsake their earthly interests. They refused the opportunities of the politician, remained loyal to God and his institutions, and were thus at a disadvantage. This continued for years, until in God's providence the ten tribes went into captivity to Babylon, at which time more and more of the people gravitated towards the territory of Judah and Benjamin, known as the kingdom of Judah. Later on, God overthrew the kingdom of Judah and allowed these people also to go into Babylonian captivity; but they preserved in a large measure their religious sentiments and interests while in the land of Babylon.

THE RETURN FROM BABYLON

Later, when the Lord delivered the people from Babylon through the instrumentality of King Cyrus, matters had so changed that there were only a few who considered it advantageous to return to Palestine. The great mass of the ten-tribe kingdom had become thoroughly incorporated with the Gentiles, and no longer professed the religion of their fathers or had faith in the promise made to Abraham. Many of the Judean captivity similarly lost faith and became Gentiles. As a matter of fact, only about 50,000 altogether returned to Palestine; and they represented the faithful, who trusted in God and sacrificed all Babylonian advantages and privileges, coming back to a desolate land and the city of Jerusalem.

These became the nucleus of a new people, who, in the days of Jesus, were in wonderful readiness for him, as compared with the remainder of mankind. In a very few years approximately 25,000 accepted Christ, with a full consecration unto death, as his footstep followers. The remainder of the nation being then cast off from special favor, the door was opened to the Gentiles, that they might hear the Gospel message and become fellow-heirs of the same body, or company, with these 25,000 consecrated of Israel, representatives of all the tribes. If we

lacked evidence of the value of the divine dealing with the nation of Israel in preparing them to accept Messiah, we see it in the fact that so many were ready to receive him in so comparatively short a time; whereas it has required 1,800 years to gather from all the other nations of the world the remainder of the elect company, the total of which, according to the Scriptures, is 144,000.

Our lesson, thus seen, indicates no failure on God's part, but wisdom, in permitting the rebellion of Jeroboam and the ten tribes of Israel. Surely it will eventually be seen, as the Bible declares, that all of God's good purposes will be accomplished; and that the word which has gone forth out of his mouth shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish that which he pleases and shall prosper in the thing whereunto he sent it. (Isaiah 55:10, 11) Soon the elect church and the spiritual seed of Abraham will be completed; and then God's promise to Abraham will begin to be fulfilled. (Galatians 3:8, 16, 29) All the families of the earth will be blessed by the kingdom of Christ and his church.

"WAIT UPON THE LORD"

Modern Jeroboams may be found all along the paths of history—men who, under guise of respect for religion, are really politicians, seeking their own advantage, and willing to sell the people to any religious system which would work to their benefit. Every one familiar with history must realize that religion has been made a cloak for all kinds of political intrigue, and always, as in the case of Jeroboam, under pretense of giving the people greater liberties.

The special thought for the people today is the one which would have been the safe one for the ten tribes of old; namely, to wait for the Lord to overrule their affairs and to deliver

them from the bondage of kings in his own way. This is the Lord's message to us now. God's people are forewarned not to use carnal weapons, and not to trust in such weapons in the hands of others. The trust of God's people is to be in God. They are to realize his faithfulness and the truth of his promises, which assure them that all things are working together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purposes.—Romans 8:28.

To these God is now saying as in olden times, "Wait ye upon me, until the time that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." This will not be literal fire devouring the literal earth, but a symbolic fire of trouble devouring the political, financial, social and religious structure of the world, and preparing them for the great blessings of Messiah's kingdom. These are referred to in the next verse, in which the Lord declares, "Then [following the fire of trouble and national distress] I will turn to the people a pure message, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."—Zephaniah 3:8, 9.

That pure message is what the Bible elsewhere speaks of as the still small voice of God, which will be heard amongst the people during the thousand years of Messiah's reign and which will effect their full deliverance from ignorance, superstition and sin back to harmony with God. And the Scriptures declare that whosoever of all mankind will not obey that voice of God through the great Messiah will be utterly destroyed from amongst the people.—Acts 3:19-23.

KING ASA'S REFORM WORK

AUGUST 22.—2 CHRONICLES 15:1-15.

KING SOLOMON'S GREAT-GRANDSON—ADVERSE INFLUENCE OF THE TEN-TRIBE KINGDOM—KING ASA'S OVERTHROW OF IDOLATRY—EGYPTIAN INVASION REPULSED—A GREAT NATIONAL REVIVAL—IDOLS OF BRONZE, WOOD, STONE, PEN AND INK—THE GOD OF THE CREEDS—NEED OF AN ASA TODAY—NEED OF ANOTHER SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT—HELP COMING THROUGH THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM.

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."—James 4:8.

Asa, king of Judah, was the great-grandson of King Solomon. The spirit of worldliness which occupied the latter part of Solomon's reign, and which led to the split-off of the ten tribes under Rehoboam his son, met with some measure of check during King Asa's reign. When the ten-tribe kingdom, called Israel, revolted and went into idolatry, the influence affected the kingdom of Judah to some extent. It became partially idolatrous. Images of Baal and groves for the practise of the licentious orgies of his worship grew in numbers in Judah, until King Asa's time. As a reformer, he set about the overthrow of all the idolatrous worship and the substitution of true religion of the God of Israel, inaugurated by Moses and the Law Covenant. We know not the influence operating upon King Asa to take a course so different from that of his father and his grandfather, but perhaps he was learning lessons from the experiences of his people.

His first endeavors to obliterate idolatry seem to have been only partially effective. He next turned his attention to the fortifying of his own country. Then came a great war with the Egyptian invader, Zerah, with an immense host, one million strong, with three hundred iron chariots. They came upon the kingdom of Judah from the south, and their numbers and reputed strength made them a terror. They sought for spoils.

Under these circumstances the Lord's message to King Asa, through Azariah the Prophet, was especially welcome. The Prophet pointed out the adversities of the ten tribes as being because they were without the true God, without the law, without the teaching priests. They had gotten into an anarchic condition, with no peace to anybody; and yet the Lord had helped them, in proportion as they at any time had turned to him. God had always shown his willingness to let those who so desired be in harmony with him, and to bless them. King Asa had manifested such a disposition; and now he had the encouraging message, "Be strong and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded."

This message encouraged the king to put away further the idolatries and to renew the altar of the Lord's house. As a consequence, he had the support of the most godly people of his own land; and, furthermore, there came to his support many from the ten-tribe kingdom who still respected God and his promises. They were glad to get away to a place where the great God was worshiped.

God blessed King Asa and his people in their repulse of the invasion of Zerah and his hosts. The spirit of reverence for God was greatly increased. The people were in a religious

mood, and a great national awakening along religious lines followed. They entered into a covenant with the Lord that all opposed to God should be put to death. "And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart and had sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about."

THE LESSON'S IMPORT TO US

We have a double interest in this lesson. First, it is a scrap of ancient history which reveals to us God's care over his people and his willingness to be found of them when they sought him, even though they and their forefathers had for a time been disloyal. Second, applying the lesson to our day, we see the people everywhere in idolatry—not only the heathen, who worship before idols of bronze and wood and stone, but also the more civilized, who have set up creed idols. These latter, printed with ink upon paper, describe the character of God in terms equally repulsive with the idols of the heathen. The true God is little known, the God of love, "the God of all grace, the Father of all mercies," "from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift."

Our creed idols represent God as a great monster, a demon. They picture God as sitting down before the creation of the world and deliberately planning for the creation of our race, with foreknowledge and intention that nearly all should spend eternity in horrible torture at the hands of fire-proof devils. They picture the church as the elect class, taken to heaven, to look over the battlements of heaven and witness the horrible sufferings of all the heathen and all the Jews, because they rejected Christ, and the sufferings also of nearly all of Christian lands, because they did not become saintly under the preaching of the Gospel.

These horrible idols are no longer respected by the more intelligent; but they are still recognized, bowed down to and worshiped by the masses. The true God is still proportionately rejected and unknown to the people. They are indeed told that he is a God of love, at the same time that they are told that he is roasting thousands of millions, and knew about their sufferings and premeditated the same from before the foundation of the world. All talk about his justice and his love is thus discounted in advance; and the people, bound by ignorance and superstition to these idols, which are centuries old, are suffering from their ignorance.

We need today an Asa to rise and, encouraged by the promises of God, to break in pieces the great creed idols of Christendom and to liberate the people from bondage to them.

He should have the support of all the God-fearing people, as King Asa had. In proportion as the idols and their worship would cease, the repair of the true altar of God would progress, and many would rejoice to present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, in his service. (Romans 12:1, 2) Not by physical force, nor by cruelty, nor by literal axes, would these great creed idols be destroyed, but by the presentation of the Word of the living God. In proportion as the Bible comes to be rightly understood, the follies of the creeds and their unscripturalness will more and more be appreciated.

TRUE COVENANTERS, ALL OF US

The account of how the people of Judah and Benjamin, the most religious people of that time, bound themselves with an oath, or covenant, to God is very interesting. It reminds us of a similar religious movement in Scotland in which some of God's people swore allegiance to him to the best of their knowledge, and signed the covenant with their own blood.

The day has come for other covenanters to come forward and to enter into a covenant with God that they will be loyal to him and to his word, and that they will put away the creed idols. We have greater knowledge today than had the covenanters of Scotland; but Christian people need to have their spirit of full consecration, full devotion to God. We have much more knowledge than had the people of Judah, but we need to have their spirit for destroying the idols and entering into a covenant with the Lord to be faithful to him. Such a

company of consecrated ones, covenanters in the highest sense, enlightened as we have the privilege of being enlightened today, would be a mighty force, a mighty power.

Many look sympathetically at such a statement, yet have not the courage of their convictions. They are timid, fearful and—shall we say it?—hypocritical. Many forget that, in joining any church, its creed is endorsed publicly; and that a private denial of it does not annul their obligations. Many forget the Master's words, "His servants ye are to whom ye render service."

Many say, "We do not believe the creeds; but they are popular, and we will support them." They do this because to take any other position would be to come into conflict with some of the wise and great and rich, who although they do not believe the creeds themselves, seem interested in maintaining them as shackles upon the masses of the people. Under these conditions we are not to expect any general reform nor to think that those faithful to the Lord will be approved before men. We are, however, to expect that when Messiah's Kingdom shall be fully established the faithful ones will be his associates in the kingdom, which will then take full control and fully overthrow the entire system of error which has bound the world of mankind with shackles of ignorance and superstition for these many years, and which has kept the people from God, in that they cannot love or from the heart obey the one who is represented to them as a merciless God and an all-powerful adversary.

INTERESTING LETTERS

SOUTH AFRICA CONVENTION

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

The Lord had been pleased to grant us much of his fellowship and blessing these latter days, and our hearts are full of gratitude accordingly. The Memorial season was a time of much refreshing to all the Lord's people in South Africa. Our hearts were deeply and joyfully moved with the thought that in all probability this celebration would be the last on this side of the veil, and that ere long we would drink of the fruit of the vine new with our dear Master in the Father's kingdom.

At Durban forty-seven partook of the symbols of our Lord's death and our dying with him, renewing our covenant of consecration and seeking grace to "run with patience the race set before us." Next on the list was the Zulu class at Ndwedwe, who at the Memorial numbered thirty-eight. Fifteen memorialized at Johannesburg, eight at Capetown, six at Douglas and two at Balfour. Reports are not yet to hand from Pretoria, where there is also a class, and the disturbed state of affairs beyond the Zambezi, due to the war, will I fear make reports from Central Africa impossible. All alike testify, however, to the great blessing received.

During the Easter holidays we had a glorious convention at Durban—truly "the best yet"! For four days we were on the mountain-top with the Lord and as one brother expressed it, "We would fain build tabernacles and dwell there." Excellent addresses were given by Brothers Anketill, Möller and Stubbs, and in this feature I had the privilege to share.

Two symposiums, one on "The Three Graces" (1 Corinthians 13:13) and the other on "The Panoply of God" (Ephesians 6:14-17), discovered much latent talent among the brethren that gives promise of large service, and was a source of much edification to the convention.

The praise and testimony meetings gave opportunity for grateful praise and thanksgiving to God, a feature so much appreciated that it prolonged the program.

On Easter Sunday a baptismal service furnished opportunity for seven sisters and six brothers to symbolize their consecration, while at a dedication service two children were presented as a thank-offering to the Lord. When, on Monday evening, we came to the final meeting and farewell address, we all felt that our cup was running over; and as we sang the old, familiar strain, "God be with you till we meet again," we felt that surely we would not have a more blessed experience "Till we meet at Jesus' feet"! Loth to part, some of the brethren who had gathered from a distance tarried with us, and we had Convention-Echo and Re-echo meetings in the week that followed.

We realized that you were with us in spirit, dear Brother, and that we had your prayers. By a unanimous rising vote I was instructed to convey to you the loving greeting of the assembled brethren and the Ecclesias in Africa which they represented, and to assure you of our deep gratitude to God and to you for your faithful ministry, by which we have all so largely profited. I have the greatest pleasure in passing

on this message. May our Heavenly Father give you grace for every trial, strength for every duty, much of the joy of his fellowship here below, and at last an abundant entrance into his kingdom!

We feel, dear Brother, that we have all been greatly strengthened by this time of refreshing for the last lap of the race, and that by God's assisting grace we are going to be faithful unto the end, and gain the crown of life.

The hope of the PHOTO-DRAMA coming to Africa is a great stimulus to the brethren and we are confidently expecting much blessing to accrue from it when it arrives.

With much love in the Lord to yourself and to all the brethren at the Tabernacle, I am

Your brother and collaborer,

WM. W. JOHNSTON.—Africa.

SPENT FIFTY YEARS SEARCHING FOR THE TRUE CHURCH

DEAR PASTOR RUSSELL:—

Please excuse me for taking up your precious time in reading this poorly written letter, but I feel I must write you a few lines to testify what the truth has done for me.

I am 78 years old. I spent fifty years of my life searching for the true church, but did not find what I was seeking until five years ago. My eyes were opened by reading the Russell-White Debate published in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, distributed by Sister Croul and Sister Green. After carefully reading that debate I exchanged the yoke of bondage for Christ's yoke, and since then I have been learning of him. I find his yoke easy, his burden light, as I strive to follow faithfully in his footsteps.

Then I read, studied, re-read the SCRIPTURE STUDIES until I proved beyond a doubt that they are the true Keys to the Bible, unlocking the doors of our Heavenly Father's inexhaustible source of love and mercy which he has in store for the dead and dying race. These precious truths have been the "pearl of great price" to me, for they have led me out of darkness into light; out of fear and doubt into faith, and hope; out of error into truth; out of sorrow and despair into the oil of gladness. They have taken my weary feet from the sandy foundations of the creeds of men and the "doctrines of devils" and placed them on the Rock of Ages—that Mighty Rock whose towering form reaches above the coming storm; and from the springs that from it burst we now can drink and quench our thirst.

Your weekly sermons and THE WATCH TOWER are beacon lights that guide and comfort me on my way when the shadows are deep and the waiting-time seems so long. The Bible is my daily bread, and since I have consecrated my all to the Lord its sacred pages are illumined, and I can read it with an understanding mind and my whole being is filled with that peace and joy which is unspeakable and full of glory—which the world cannot give, and, praise the Lord, neither can it take away!

My lessons in the school of Christ have mostly been learned through the printed page; but I am so thankful that I have