

followers. Some are "blind leaders of the blind," while others apparently are "willingly ignorant." Like the Pharisees of old, some have taken away from their too trustful followers the "key of knowledge," and are grieved that the people are now being taught better. However, the result is that some are getting awake and learning to think, and to study the Bible for themselves, who otherwise might have slept on. It is God's "due time" for his faithful to be awakened and to come to a knowledge of the truth; and for aught we know he is using the wrath of man to praise himself.

A still more despicable course is followed by some claiming to be ministers of Christ. Unable to controvert Pastor Russell's teachings they slander him shamefully. Professing to be Christians, they insinuate and come as close as possible to infracting the lowest standards of human law respecting slander and libel. They that preach the Golden Rule and profess to believe that everybody who breaks it is going to everlasting torture, do they forget the words of St. John that their course is in the sight of our Lord really "murder"?—1 John 3:15.

VOL. XXXIV

BROOKLYN, N. Y., FEBRUARY 1, 1913

No. 3

## THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

"Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it."—1 Cor. 4:12.

Since God himself is love, the very highest ideal of perfection which he has given to his people is the standard of love. We cannot imagine a higher standard than this, nor one more difficult to attain. It is the special characteristic without which none will get the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This mark of perfection was stamped on our Lord. He delighted to do the Father's will in all respects, even to the extent of laying down his life for those who, on account of Adam's sin, were under the sentence of death.

Our Lord did not, however, need to run toward this mark of perfect love; for he was always perfect—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26) The church, on the contrary, are naturally imperfect and fallen by heredity; but we have been washed from all stain of guilt in the blood of the Lamb. The mark of perfect love we attain gradually. We first reach perfection of heart intention, and then we pass through experiences which crystallize our characters in righteousness. In all of these trials and difficulties, we must demonstrate that, if our physical organism were perfect, we would always do God's holy will.

As we see this quality of love in our Lord Jesus, we appreciate it, even though we realize that we are not up to the standard which God requires. Nevertheless, our great desire is that we have perfect love for everything in harmony with the will of God. After we have reached perfection of heart intention, the test is no longer upon us of attaining the mark, but of pressing down upon that mark until our character has been crystallized. As the Apostle Paul says, "Having done all, stand." (Eph. 6:13) We do not progress beyond perfect love; for no one can do more than to have a full desire that God's will be done in him. He could do no more, whether he lived five years longer or fifty years. Perfect love is the mark toward which he pressed, and he can attain no higher standard.

While one stands at the mark of love, the tests grow stronger. We pass through experiences—often trivial enough—which tempt us to malice, envy, anger and strife. If we are overcome by these tests, and fall away from the condition of perfect love, we shall lose the prize for which we are running. (Phil. 3:14) One who thus falls away may get into the great company for development; but if he were to lose all love, he would go into the second death. In either of these cases, the person has moved away from the mark of perfect love, the only standard for those who desire to be in the kingdom and to participate in the glorious things which God has in store for those who love him supremely.

### GENEROSITY AND BENEVOLENCE CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Our Lord desires to see in his followers the disposition to overcome the weaknesses and tendencies of the fallen condition and to follow in his footsteps. Of him it is written, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps; . . . who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." (1 Peter 2:21-23) To be reviled is to be treated to appear vile, to be evil spoken of, slandered. The natural tendency of all is to resent injustice, to render evil for evil, to give as good as we get—and a little more if possible. This is the natural inclination because we are in the fallen condition, unbalanced in our minds.

Our Lord's teaching is all the opposite of the spirit of reviling. No matter how much we are reviled, we are not to revile in return; no matter how much we are persecuted, we are not to persecute in return. This is the law of the new creation. Instead of reviling again, we are to bless. This does not mean that when one has said a slanderous thing of us, we are to say, "God bless you"; but that if the person is in difficulty and needs help, we are to overlook altogether what he has done to us, and be just as ready to help him as any other person.

This spirit of generosity and benevolence should be the spirit of the Lord's people. We are to bless those who revile and persecute us by doing them good and by explaining to them, if possible, the situation, which evidently they have misunderstood. We are to bless them by helping them, if opportunity offers, out of darkness into light.

Our faith is greatly strengthened by considering the course of our Lord and noting the similarity between his experiences and ours. Both he and his apostles were persecuted by the Jewish household of faith. The whole Jewish nation professed to be God's people; and our Lord recognized them as his own, as it is written. (John 1:11) Yet when "he came unto his own," they received him not, but persecuted him and even crucified him. Later, they persecuted his apostles and their followers.

Apparently the household of faith has had a monopoly of persecutions. All down the Gospel age, those who have professed to be God's people have persecuted others. Both Catholics and Protestants have persecuted each other and the Jews, God's chosen people. The majority of persecutions have been by those who professed to be the people of God, many of whom really thought they were.

The persecutions of today are of the same kind. They come from those who profess to be the Lord's people. In harmony with this fact is the Scripture which says, "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." (Isa. 66:5) This statement applies also to the members of our own families, who are not in sympathy with the truth; that is to say, any persecutions coming from the members of our families are usually from those who profess to be Christians. As a rule, their opposition is not for personal reasons, but on account of some doctrinal point, which they do not see in the same light as do those whom they persecute.

It behooves the Lord's people to look with great sympathy upon those who may be their persecutors. We recall instances where persecution has been carried on with the thought that the persecutors were doing the will of God. Those who persecuted the Lord Jesus were to some degree ignorant of who he was. In Acts 3:17, St. Peter says, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." St. Paul says, "Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. 2:8) When Saul of Tarsus persecuted St. Stephen and others of the early church, he verily thought that he did God service, as he himself afterwards tells us.—Acts 26:9-11.

### FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH A CAUSE OF PERSECUTION

All down through the Gospel age, those who have been faithful to the truth of God have been put "out of the synagogue." The creeds of men have been barriers to keep out those who understood the Word of God. There was a time when many were excommunicated as heretics because of conscience. One of these was Michael Servetus, a brother Christian, whose horrible death at the stake was brought about by John Calvin. This course of conduct literally fulfilled the Scripture which says, "They shall put you out of the synagogue: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."—John 16:2.

Those who had charge of the synagogues were not always bad people, but they were mistaken, as was Saul of Tarsus when he haled men and women to prison. (Acts 8:3) The same conditions exist today. The darkness hateth the light. When any become enlightened in the Word of God, they are told, "If you stay with us, you must not present these matters." Those who are loyal to God are in this way forced out of the synagogues.

Our day has a peculiarity, however, that other days have not had. The divine plan is so beautiful that by its light we see that others are in darkness. The voice of God, the voice

of conscience, of enlightenment, calls the people of God out of Babylon, which is misrepresenting God's character, plan and word. Instead of feeling like bringing vengeance upon our enemies, we should feel sympathy for them—not with them, but for them. We should realize that with them it is very much as it was with the Jews of our Lord's day, who, had they known what they were doing, would have been very much ashamed of their course.

The persecutions of today are different from those of any other period of history. Many faithful followers of the Lord are reproved and slandered for their loyalty to the Word of God. Our Lord's words, however, warrant us in expecting that those who are faithful to him will be evil spoken of, even as he was. With his words before our minds, we should not be surprised at false charges and false insinuations made against his true followers in proportion to their prominence as his servants.

Our Lord's warning that men "shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake" (Matt. 5:11), does not imply that those who malign the true Christian will say, "We do this to you for Christ's sake, because you are one of his followers." We have never heard of any one who was thus persecuted, and therefore such a course cannot be what our Lord meant. Evidently his meaning was that his followers, honorable, moderate, truthful, honest, virtuous, possessing the spirit of a sound mind, like himself, would be highly esteemed amongst the nominally religious, were it not for their loyalty to the Word of God. Because of faithfully pointing out popular errors, because of fidelity to the truth, they are hated by those prominent in churchianity.

#### THE GOLDEN RULE A TEST TO CHRISTIANS

These conditions are testing the adherents of churchianity along the lines of the Golden Rule; and when they speak evil through malice, hatred, strife and opposition, they are condemning themselves under that rule; for well do they know that they do not wish others to speak evil of them—either through hearsay or through concocted lies or through malice.

These conditions are also a test to the Lord's people, to prove whether they are willing to endure these persecutions and oppositions cheerfully, as a part of the cost of being disciples of Christ. If under the pressure they revile in return and slander and backbite, they are thus demonstrating their unfitness to have a place in the kingdom. If, on the other hand, they receive these lessons with patience and long-suffering, they will develop more of the character-likeness of their Redeemer and thus become more worthy of a share with him in the future glory.

Our Lord's declaration, "Ye are the salt of the earth," may very properly be applied to those of the followers of the Lord who give heed to his teachings and who cultivate his character-likeness. As salt is useful in arresting decomposition, so the influence of these faithful ones is preservative. At the time of the first advent, the world was in a condition in which it would probably have hastened to degeneracy and decay, but for the introduction of the preservative influence extending from the members of the body of Christ. That influence is still manifest in so-called Christendom.

Even today, although the truly consecrated believers in the great Redeemer are confessedly few in number, yet the saltiness from the teachings of the Savior has a wide influence upon the world. Without it, doubtless, corruption and a complete collapse would have come long ago. In spite of it, we see very corrupting and corrupt influences at work everywhere; and the wider our horizon, the more general our information, the more we realize the truth of this statement. When the last member of the body of Christ shall have passed beyond the veil, the salt will be gone. Then corruption will take hold swiftly, and the result will be the great time of trouble such as never has since there was a nation.—Matt. 24:21; Dan. 12:1.

The Scriptures point out the fact that the Lord's consecrated people belong so completely to him that in all their afflictions he is afflicted. (Isa. 63:9) When Saul of Tarsus was persecuting the early church, our Lord called out to him on the way to Damascus, and said, "Saul, Saul, why perse-

cutest thou ME? And he said, Who are thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." (Acts 9:4, 5) Saul was not persecuting the glorified Savior directly, but he was persecuting the followers of Jesus—not the new creatures, but the flesh. Since, then, our Lord adopts the flesh of his followers as his, the church is said to be filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.—Col. 1:24.

Throughout the Gospel age, the world has been blind to the fact that it has persecuted the church of Christ—those whom God has chosen to be joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 8:17) When later the eyes of mankind shall have been opened, they will realize what they have done, and will be very much ashamed of their conduct. After Saul of Tarsus saw that he had been fighting against God, his whole course of life was changed.

#### THE ANTITYPICAL BURNING OUTSIDE THE CAMP

As our Lord suffered in the flesh, so will also those who are members of the church, which is his body. (Eph. 1:22, 23) St. Peter admonishes us to expect this, saying, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind." (1 Peter 4:1) It is the flesh, not the new creature, that suffers. While we are suffering in the flesh, we are also being developed in the spirit.

In Psalm 44:22, we read, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." St. Paul shows that this statement is a prophecy applicable to the entire membership of Christ, of whom our Lord Jesus is the Head. (Rom. 8:36) The day to which reference is made is the Gospel age (2 Cor. 6:2), the antitypical day of atonement. As on the typical atonement day the typical sacrifices were offered, so all down the Gospel age the antitypical "better sacrifices" have been made. (Heb. 9:23; 13:11-13) These "better sacrifices" began with our Lord and continue with his body, which is the church.

The antitypical sacrificing began at the time of our Lord's consecration, which was his full surrender of his life to God, to be used in any way that the Father saw fit and that his providences might direct. The church follows in his steps. Our consecration is our death to the world, to earthly hopes, aims and ambitions. In our Lord's case, we see that his sacrificial death not only meant the giving away of his physical strength in healing, teaching, etc., but included also the suffering resulting from the opposition of those about him. Even from members of his own family he experienced ostracism. So Jesus died daily.

In proportion as we are faithful to our heavenly Father and to the terms of our consecration, we shall have similar experiences. Faithfulness to our covenant of sacrifice will bring upon us opposition from the world, the flesh and the devil. Particularly will our persecution come from those Christians who are not developed sufficiently to appreciate matters from the proper standpoint.

St. Paul, in speaking of his own case, says that he was dying daily. (1 Cor. 15:31) This statement applies to all who are laying down their lives in the Lord's service. Sometimes it is by the expenditure of physical strength; sometimes it is by a stab from some one who has hurt us, wounded us, injured us with his tongue. In the type, this kind of experience is represented by the burning of the flesh outside the camp, a place which typifies the outcast condition.

The faithful servants of the Lord will be ostracised by the world, as our Lord foretold. (Matt. 24:9; John 16:1-3) Their attitude of full consecration to do the Father's will is not appreciated; for to the world it seems to be foolish. It is a reproof. As our Lord said, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."—John 3:20.

To be faithful unto death is a part of the covenant of sacrifice. In some instances, death may come early; in others, it may come late. St. Stephen was faithful unto death, which came early in his Christian experience; St. Peter was also faithful, but met his death after a long lifetime. The promise to the overcomer is, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."—2 Tim. 2:12.

### 1913—MEMORIAL SUPPER—1913

The proper date for the celebration of the Memorial Supper this year will be Thursday evening, March 20, after 6 p. m. This is the beginning of the 14th of Nisan of the Jewish Calendar. The 15th of Nisan marks the full of the moon following the spring equinox. The moon symbolized the favor granted to Israel. It was at its full the day Jesus died—thereafter it began to wane, symbolical of the Jewish favor having ended at that time.

We commend to all of the Lord's people the celebration of our Savior's death, in harmony with his request, "As oft

as ye shall do this, do it in remembrance of me." We understand this to be an injunction to an annual celebration, and that the appropriate time is the anniversary of the first celebration. We give notice thus early because subscribers to this Journal as far away as Alaska, Japan, Australia, China and India are interested with us in this precious memorial of our Master's sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It is to us a remembrance also of our covenant to share with him in his sufferings and of his promise that the faithful shall also be partakers of his coming glory in the kingdom.

# REPORTS FROM FOREIGN BRANCHES FOR 1912

## BRITISH BRANCH REPORT FOR 1912

Dear Brother Russell:—

The figures giving the British Branch report for the year ending October 31 have been sent to the office. We trust they duly reached you.

It has been a year of progress in all directions. The chief factor is the devotion of the colporteurs. In nearly all cases they have considerably increased their sales; and the numbers of the colporteurs have also increased, through the encouragement they are now getting. We believe there is more work possible in this part of the field than ever. Record sales are being effected. And it is still the case that in places colporteurd once or twice the books are as salable as ever. The volunteer literature has gone out at a rather lower rate than last year, but the class extension work has absorbed a good deal of volunteering energy.

The class extension work is proving a great blessing to the brethren as well as to those who have ears to hear. In London both the Tabernacle congregation and the Forest Gate church have met with much encouragement. The class extension committee of the Tabernacle report 18 new week-night classes formed during the year through this work, and two existing classes greatly augmented, out of twenty-one series of meetings held—results which are gratifying. These results, we believe, are largely due to a careful following out of the suggestions given in the pamphlet. Other classes also report progress, some good, some not so good, but it is noticeable that the best results follow when the suggestions given are accepted and adhered to. After three chart talks and three lectures, with the same brother as chairman through all the meetings, the people are generally found willing to form a class for further study.

The pilgrim service has been greater this year than any previous year. The visits of the pilgrims are much appreciated by the classes, who, everywhere, show a desire to use the occasion for a public witness. These meetings, with the class extension work, have of necessity proved a considerable tax upon the finances of the brethren, yet the donations to the Tract Fund show an increase. The book-lending, which has been tried by some classes, has not made much advance during the year. It has been a blessing to those who have engaged in it, and has been used of the Lord in some instances to bring some into the light of the truth. Especially is this the case in Forest Gate, London. Altogether the outlook is good. People, aroused by the "present distress," felt both in the churches and in domestic life and politics, are paying more heed to the message of the truth; they are more ready to listen and to read. The general spreading of our literature and the publication of the sermons are having an effect upon the country, and the evidences are that there are many "open doors" for service awaiting us all. We believe there are splendid opportunities for colporteur work and class extension work awaiting those who have liberty and grace to work while it is yet day. The spiritual health of the classes is good, though, we regret, some of the dear brethren are allowing themselves to be tried by dissensions sowed by the enemy.

We are rejoicing in the privilege of service, and daily we pray for the Lord's continued blessing upon all the work, both here and abroad, and also upon your own.

Yours in his grace and service,

BRITISH BRANCH,

*Executive Committee.*

### OUTPUT OF STUDIES, BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES in cloth.....	96,922
STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES in Karatol, leather, India, and foreign tongues.....	3,955
STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. I in magazine form	5,220

Total .....	106,097
Books (Manna, Poems, Manual and Hymnal).....	3,224
Booklets .....	13,592

Grand Total ..... 122,913

This shows an increase over the output of last year in STUDIES of 32,338 volumes; in books, of 1,286; whereas there is a loss in the numbers of booklets and Volume I in magazine form.

Circulation of PEOPLES PULPIT and EVERYBODY'S

PAPER .....	7,356,869
Tracts .....	316,000
WATCH TOWERS on Hell.....	53,115

Total ..... 7,725,984

This represents, figured in the usual tract pages, 117,709,904, 1,912,000, and 3,399,360, a total of 123,021,264. Practically a

million more copies of PEOPLES PULPIT and EVERYBODY'S PAPER were distributed this year than last.

### SUMMARY OF CORRESPONDENCE

Letters and cards received.....	19,639
Letters and cards sent out.....	19,501

## REPORT OF AUSTRALASIAN BRANCH FOR 1912

Dear Brother Russell:—

We are glad to think that the report which we have now the pleasure of sending along for the year past will be pleasing to you. We continually realize that what is done is "not by power nor by might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," and that what has been accomplished is through the Lord's Spirit in his people, energizing them to more and more earnest zeal in his service, and with desire that every grain shall be garnered in this part of the harvest field.

While we are rejoicing that many have been brought to a knowledge of the truth during the year, there is still the more pleasing feature, if that is possible, that those who have been longer associated with the harvest message have certainly increased their joy in the Lord, their love for the truth and their appreciation of the means which the Lord has particularly used for bringing these matters to the household of faith. A corresponding increase of zeal is manifest all along the line, and you will notice that the donations to the Tract Fund by way of Good Hopes, etc., have greatly increased, as though the friends had made up their minds to try to meet the expense of the work in this field if possible.

When one thinks of the 724,000 PEOPLES PULPIT and EVERYBODY'S PAPER that have been sent out, mostly by mail, it represents a beautiful amount of patient, steady plodding by those who have been able to do it. Some have written the wrappers by the thousands and sent them to us; while others have been able to wrap the papers for the post; and so the work has gone on. We cannot but think that the Lord will be pleased with the diligent efforts, specially of some, in this matter.

The colporteurs have had a good year, and there is an increase in the output of volumes over last year of about 33 1/3 per cent.; and although the ground had all been previously gone over, the prospects are still good, and we are glad that some others are endeavoring to so arrange matters as to be able to enter the work even at the eleventh hour. Some of the workers have had specially interesting times and wonderful evidences of the Lord's favor and guidance and blessing.

We think that it is just possible that some may not be realizing opportunities in this service. Though unable to give all their time, they may be able to spend a few hours a week. There must still be some that need the sealing in their foreheads, for the winds are surely to be let loose when this work is finished. And it always seems to me that it is a wonderful joy to take the water of truth to the thirsty soul, to search out the Nathanaels, and get them to "come and see" and realize the presence of Messiah.

Brother Nelson will report on his travels; he seems specially to have been a means of assistance and blessing to the Sydney class, who undertook to pay his expenses and also co-labored with him in the extension work. Their hard work in circulating the numbers of EVERYBODY'S PAPER has been rewarded, not only by blessing on themselves, but by a nice addition of new members to their class.

We believe that the convention that was held there last Easter was the beginning of better conditions for the church in Sydney. The convention at Melbourne takes place at Christmas, and we are looking forward for the best one yet. We hope to be able to report it so. Certainly it was a good one on the last occasion.

There are evidences that the prosperity of this country, which has been so pronounced for the past year or two, has reached its zenith. Among the thoughtful, whether religious or not, there is a general impression that some sort of crisis is being approached and that things cannot continue as they are very long.

We are still hoping that you may come over and help us. The friends have had so much disappointment twice in regard to yourself, and then also in respect to Brother Hollister. We hope that when you do come it will not be for too short a time. We are sure that much good would result, not only in stimulating the friends, but also in appealing to the Christian community generally. While still hoping along this line, we desire that you will join with us and all the dear friends in these parts that the spirit of love and zeal may dwell richly with us all, that the work may go forward to the glory of God.

With Christian love, yours in the service of Christ,

R. E. B. NICHOLSON.

## PUBLICATIONS CIRCULATED

Copies of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES.....	12,388
Copies of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES in magazine form .....	666
Copies of booklets.....	1,800
Total .....	14,854

## FREE LITERATURE

PEOPLES PULPIT and EVERYBODY'S PAPER.....	724,323
Sample WATCH TOWERS, debates, etc.....	14,369
Low estimate of sermons in newspapers.....	3,532,233

Total .....4,270,925

These, represented in the usual tract pages, would be about 17,386,176; 1,162,776; 12,144,700 and 30,693,652 respectively.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Letters and cards received.....	3,096
Letters and cards dispatched.....	4,486

## REPORT OF WORK IN GERMANY FOR 1912

Dear Brother Russell:—

Enclosed please find the report for the last quarter of our fiscal year and the trial balance sheet for the year. I had the pleasure to be at the Hamburg convention and took part most of the time—Sister Koettitz accompanying me. The friends enjoyed themselves very much and confessed to having received a great blessing. About seventy took part, half of which number was from a distance. We had a nice hall and sent invitations to the addresses we had received through colporteurs. There was also a notice in the paper. The result was that on the first and last days of the convention (being Sunday and a holiday, respectively), more than a hundred strangers attended, and quite a number of these showed considerable interest.

At the first Hamburg meeting after the convention, eighteen new friends attended. The convention remembered you kindly and passed a resolution to send you heartfelt greetings and best wishes in the Lord. These conventions are certainly a great blessing.

Having heard of the resolution on Hell passed by the Washington convention, the Hamburg convention wished to go on record, and unanimously adopted it in German translation, voting that it might be sent to the German newspapers and clergy of the continent. The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* reported the matter on the second day following. And other newspapers later.

Now let me give a brief report of the work during the past year. I would mention first the circulation of literature, as follows:

Volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES.....	11,056
Volume I in TOWER form.....	11,230
Various booklets .....	35,555
Regular issue of the German WATCH TOWER (12 numbers) .....	43,200
Sample copies of German WATCH TOWER (12 numbers) .....	24,000
"Hell" TOWERS .....	8,842
PEOPLES PULPIT, EVERYBODY'S PAPER, Yiddish papers and Old Theology tracts.....	2,919,050

The last item, of free literature, together with the above-mentioned sample TOWERS and TOWERS on Hell, represent in tract pages 83,817,600.

These figures include the circulation of nine hundred volumes in the Hollandish, Polish and Hungarian languages, some Polish and Hungarian P. P., and 500,000 Hollandish P. P., sent to Holland, South Africa and America.

Comparing these figures with those of last year, you will find a considerable increase in the number of volumes and booklets circulated. We received 5,886 letters and cards, answering 3,977. About 200 friends were immersed during the year.

As for the general spirit of the friends in the truth, I consider that it is very good, although it seems that we do not come up to the standard of freedom (from earthly cares), liveliness and success set us by our American brethren in the harvest work. However, the Lord knows our hearts and makes allowance for different conditions and circumstances in this country. I feel that the friends may be credited with having done about all that they could, and I am surprised that the net results are so large. And I rejoice, praising the Lord for his blessings which have crowned the efforts of the dear German friends—of Germany, Switzerland, and part of Austria and Russia—with such success. I should mention also with appreciation the encouragement given and the assistance rendered by the German friends in America who have written to us and obtained literature from here.

Your visits in this country were a great inspiration to all who had an opportunity to see and hear you, and we look

forward to seeing you soon again if the Lord will. We have entered the new year of our labors, with political and social disturbances upon us and ahead of us, as you are aware from the newspapers. We must gird up the loins of our minds, as the Lord and the apostles suggest, and be sober and hope to the end, daily, for the favor to be brought unto us finally.

With these brief remarks let me close my this year's report, with the happiest greetings to yourself and the Brooklyn Bethel Family, and to all who are in Christ Jesus and one with us in the same hope, from the German Bible House Family, and from your humble brother and fellow-servant in Christ,

O. A. KOETTITZ.

## SUISSE-GERMAN DEPT. REPORT FOR 1912

(Included in the Foregoing)

## DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE

STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and MANNAS.....	1,602
STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES Vol. I, in magazine form.....	1,391
Booklets .....	2,303
Copies of WATCH TOWER.....	6,000
EVERYBODY'S PAPER and Tracts.....	94,000

## REPORT OF WORK IN SWEDEN—1912

Dear Brother Russell:—

By the Lord's grace we have passed another year in his blessed service, and are now so much the nearer to the end of this harvest period; and by his favor it is my privilege to send you the report of the Swedish work for the last fiscal year.

As the following figures will show, the work has been richly blessed of the Lord, and a considerable general increase also is shown this year, although not in every branch, as we would have wished to have it. We have also the very best reasons for our still greater expectations for the year before us. The friends over here realize more and more the importance of the present privileges opened up for us by the present Chief Reaper, and a large part of the "common people" seem to be hungering and thirsting for the truth as never before. Indeed, we can see how "the field [still] is ripe unto the harvest"—and more so now than ever.

Our hearts rejoice, while we at the same time feel greatly humbled when we realize some of the mercies shown us in connection with this wonderful time of preparation for the setting up of the kingdom; and we are most earnestly decided, by the Lord's help, to be faithful to him and to his special channel, until the end, using every remaining opportunity in the best way possible.

One of the most remarkable increases is shown in the number of books sold, which is not very far from twice as large as the corresponding figure the preceding year, depending, we believe, to a large extent upon the publishing of the new-styled, revised Swedish versions of all the different volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, which also has been done here during the year. The large editions (of 30,000 copies altogether) of the first three volumes published in June this year, have during these few months melted down to such a degree that we have found it wise to already begin the printing of new editions in the same quantities. More than thirty dear brethren and sisters have labored as colporteurs during the year. A few of these have just recently received the truth, and have joined in the work with great zeal.

The free distribution of tracts has also increased, as you will see. A large part of the issue of "*Eko fran talarstolen*"—PEOPLES PULPIT—of which we now regularly print about 150,000 copies every month—has been used in connection with the advertising of public meetings in various parts of the country.

The regular pilgrim service has been richly blessed and used of the Lord. We have had two general conventions (the first in Orebro with not less than 500 truth friends present, and the second in Stockholm—when we had the joy of having you—yourself—in our midst, and had the privilege of listening to your helpful and loving words to us), and a large number of well attended and profitable local conventions in nearly all parts of the land. Besides this, 81 extra public meetings—of which many were in places where we have never before had any meeting—have been held by myself all over the land during the year.

These extra meetings have had a total attendance of 31,150 adults, which as a rule have given the very closest attention to our presentation of the good message for fully two hours and more each time. At the close of these meetings, we have sold between two and three thousand volumes of the STUDIES, etc., and we have also in connection with them distributed nearly one-half million "*Eko fran talarstolen*." 417,500 of that number have been put in the homes of the people before the meetings, advertising the same, by

brethren who voluntarily have given their time in this way to serve the cause we all love so dearly.

The number of subscribers to the Swedish WATCH TOWER has increased by only 142, but we hope it will increase more during the year before us. The voluntary donations to the Tract Fund show again a considerable increase, which is specially remarkable when one considers the limited financial conditions in which most of the friends here live, as well as the fact that a large part of their savings has been used in connection with the hundreds of meetings held all over the country, and of which the expenses have not been reported to us.

We daily commend you, our beloved Pastor, and all your faithful co-laborers everywhere, to the Lord's grace, and are glad to know that we also are remembered by you.

With much Christian love from ourself, and on behalf of the Swedish brethren,

Yours in the service of our Redeemer,  
AUGUST LUNDBORG.

#### SUMMARY OF THE WORK

Copies STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES circulated.....	27,780
Vol. I in Magazine edition, sold at cost.....	12,650
Total .....	40,430
Various other books and booklets, MANNA, TABERNACLE SHADOWS, etc.....	25,557
Total .....	65,987
<i>Eko fran talarstolen</i> (PEOPLES PULPIT), issued free	753,000
Other free tracts and sample TOWERS.....	126,036
Total .....	879,036

Expressed in usual form of tract pages.....	14,124,128
Number of subscribers to the Swedish WATCH TOWER .....	1,881
Old sets Swedish TOWER, cloth-bound and unbound.	700
Bibles sold .....	109
Number of meetings held under the auspices of the Society .....	1,395
Number of miles traveled in preaching tours.....	73,571
Letters and cards sent out.....	5,320
Letters and cards received.....	4,118
Total number of various sendings, by mail and by railroad .....	27,567

#### REPORT FROM THE NORWEGIAN BRANCH FOR 1912

##### SUMMARY OF THE WORK

Number of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and MAN-NAS sold.....	2,179
Number of booklets sold.....	2,069
Total .....	4,248
Tracts and Norwegian PEOPLES PULPIT distributed.	123,625
These estimated as tract pages.....	1,978,000
Subscriptions to the Norweg. PEOPLES PULPIT....	1,066
Subscriptions to the Dano-Norweg. WATCH TOWER.	265
Letters and cards received.....	1,502
Letters and cards sent out.....	1,214
Parcels sent out.....	11,598
Number of public meetings.....	42
Number of parlor meetings.....	148
Number of attendants, approximately.....	14,500

#### ANNUAL REPORT OF DANISH BRANCH FOR 1912

Dear Brother Russell:—

I hereby submit the report of the work done in this country, in our endeavor to spread the good tidings of the kingdom so near at hand. Although the figures are small, yet in one or two branches the work has widened somewhat. More tracts have been distributed than formerly, and although no regular pilgrim service has been taken up, more work has been done in that line than previously, and both public and private meetings have been held in different parts of the country. Lately we have taken up a work on Sundays, in different towns and places, from which we have been able to get back to Copenhagen the same day. Early on Sunday mornings, some twenty of the friends of the class here have started out for some such place, and throughout the morning and forenoon they have distributed tracts announcing a public meeting held in the afternoon. These meetings have also been announced in the local papers, and have been well attended. A number of the books have been sold at the close of the meetings, to those who had become interested through the tracts or the meeting. In various places we see indications of spiritual growth amongst the friends, and great joy in the Lord, and in his wonderful message. We trust that

through the Lord's grace we shall be able to do more in all branches during the next year, and we are very grateful for our privileges in connection with the work.

With Christian love, and best wishes,

Yours in our dear Redeemer,

CARL LUTTICHAU.—Copenhagen.

#### SUMMARY OF THE WORK

Output of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES.....	2,938
Output of various booklets.....	1,927
Total .....	4,865
Tracts free .....	234,400
Letters and cards received.....	1,125
Letters, cards and parcels sent out.....	1,125
Copies of Danish WATCH TOWER sent out monthly..	876

#### REPORT OF JAMAICA BRANCH FOR 1912

Dear Brother Russell:—

It is our privilege and pleasure to report to you the work as it progresses in this part of the harvest field, and our many blessings while sharing in its labors, which are of much value to us in our Christian development and also highly appreciated.

Nearly all our efforts during the past twelve months have met with success, and we believe the dear Lord has signally directed all our services, the dear friends in the main being of one heart and one mind throughout the island. And in our experiences with the various ecclesias we find them loyal to the truth and to its source.

There are many becoming interested at this time, and as a whole the truth is being well established in the island, although we are putting out more literature in other parts (other islands) at present. Owing to a drouth which has continued in Jamaica for several months, causing a financial strain, and also owing to the fact that the island has been thoroughly canvassed in the past two years, there is less literature being circulated here; but other points seem to have some virgin soil and additional opportunities for the blessed truth to spread.

The colporteurs labor under many difficulties in the West Indies, Colon, etc., and some find it very difficult to meet expenses; however, they are doing good work. As you will observe by the annual report, there has been a large number of volumes placed in the hands of readers within the past year, which will undoubtedly serve their purpose in due time.

With much Christian love, I am,

Your brother and fellow-servant in Christ,

ROBT. R. PRICE.

#### SUMMARY OF THE WORK

Total number STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES sold....	6,944
Total number STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES magazine form .....	525
Total number other books sold.....	1,250
Total number booklets sold.....	1,012
Total number PEOPLES PULPIT and EVERYBODY'S PAPER .....	315,000
Estimated in tract pages.....	5,040,000
Public lectures .....	27
Estimated total attendance.....	9,449
Average attendance .....	350
Semi-public talks and class lessons.....	159
Total attendance .....	5,467
Average attendance .....	35
Letters and cards received.....	887
Letters and cards sent.....	1,805

#### THE GOSPEL IN SOUTH INDIA

My Beloved Brother Russell:—

I have been anxiously waiting to hear from you. We praise the Lord for the blessed privilege of laying down our lives for the Lord's cause. The work is spreading rapidly and there are wider scopes for extending the work in different places. In all we have about fifty-odd congregations or Bible Study classes now, and we must have some teachers in each of these places. Then only will the message of the hour reach those of the surrounding places.

If we may spend monthly at an average of five rupees on each class, the work will have greater effect. No matter how deeply the poor friends are interested in a place, without our frequent visits all the wolves and foxes gather and howl and tear them to pieces. Really, it is a hard thing to keep them away, without some one on the spot. When we start a class in a place, immediately the sectarian people go there and say all manner of evil things about you, and all the workers, falsely, and try their best to discourage the poor people. It seems we have to take a paternal care over these poor friends until they are well grounded in the truth and strength-



ened in spirit and in faith. "They were grieved that the people were taught."—Acts 4:2.

Brother Carmichael is the one who spends his entire time distributing tracts now. Other friends also do it, but they give only part of their time. Brother Joseph is in North Travancore starting classes. He also finds much opposition in those parts.

Here in almost all the vernacular missionary papers there is some slanderous report about me and the work—almost every issue. They call me Anti-christ, dog, devil, and I know not what all. I don't have time to look or listen, as the pressure of the Lord's work is heavy and the time is so short.

The latest development is that some of the literature of the enemies of the truth in America has found its way to Travancore, and some sectarians are glorying over it and are translating and publishing it in the vernacular languages.

At the instigation of so-called "Christians," we are drawn into Court, not for committing any crime, but for putting up sheds and teaching the people the Gospel truth. The reason is that there is a law here that no shrine or temple shall be built by anybody without the permission of the Government. These people know well that it is not at all our purpose to put up shrines and temples, and yet they want to scare the poor people and put us to unnecessary trouble and expense.

There is a case pending at Quilon in which I am one of twelve accused. The accusation against us is that we have violated the law of the State in building a Christian church. This is the place where Brother Pyles and Dr. Jones went for the night meeting, when you and Brother Hall and myself went to the English school at Nellykakuzy, where Dr. William lives. We all, the twelve accused, went to Quilon for the case, and some of the witnesses did not appear; hence it is posted for next Friday. Of course it will not amount to anything, yet there is trouble and unnecessary expense in connection with it, and loss of time. These are the things our enemies delight in. Such is the spirit of the missionaries, who have come to the heathen to preach about Christ.

The tract, "Problem of the Ages," is translated and printed in Malayalam and Tamil, in small quantities of 25,000. As the funds are not sufficient, I am waiting for your instructions in the matter.

Friends in Royapuram want me to go and spend some time with them, and there are many places that could be worked for the glory of the Lord. The Federated Malay States constitute a very good field, as there are many educated Indians there who already show some interest through the tracts I have been sending through the mail.

If I could travel for two months visiting some of these places, I am quite sure there would be much interest aroused in those parts. I only make this suggestion. I think about 500 or 600 rupees would be enough for the entire trip.

I could go from here to Madras, and after spending a few days there, go to Burmah, and then to Penang, and to the Malay States. There are many Tamil and Malayalam people in those places. I think until I come back Brothers Theophilus and James may be able to go on with the work here.

Herewith I enclose the monthly statements and the receipts of the 53 catechists and teachers, for the help they have received.

Dear Brother, I know it is hard for you to spare even a few moments for me, yet I beg of you to drop a few lines to encourage and cheer me up and direct me with your counsel, at least once a month.

I die daily, not only for the cause of the Master, but also for the servant of the Lord. You know that whatever arrow is shot at you by enemies, first pierces me through my heart. May the Lord give you, dear brother, more strength, more courage, more wisdom and love, every passing day.

With love and prayers, your brother and fellow-sufferer for the cause of the Lord,

S. P. DAVEY.

#### REPORT OF WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA FOR 1912

Volumes STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES circulated....	1,409
Other books .....	185
Booklets .....	1,818
English PEOPLES PULPITS.....	28,808
English EVERYBODY'S PAPER.....	30,000
Dutch PEOPLES PULPITS.....	3,000

(These last three items figured in tract pages are equivalent, respectively, to 460,928, 480,000 and 48,000.)

Mail dispatched .....	1,716
Meetings held .....	309

#### WORK FOR THE BLIND

During the year 1912 the efforts of the Gould Free Library for the Blind show as follows:—

Books loaned out, postage free.....	876
Tracts sent out, free.....	2,698
Representing in tract pages.....	37,044
Letters received .....	652
Letters dispatched .....	483

Your Brother in Christ,

F. B. GOULD.

## ABRAHAM'S AGE ON ENTERING CANAAN

We are in receipt of a number of letters, calling attention to what seems to the writers an error in the Chronology given in STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. II, relative to the date of Abraham's birth, his entrance into Canaan, etc. For the sake of these, as well as others who may have the same difficulty, we here enlarge upon what is stated in Vol. II, pages 44-47.

Gen. 11:32 says that at his death Terah's age was two hundred and five years. Acts 7:4 says that then Abraham removed into Canaan. And Gen. 12:4 states that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran. Hence Terah's age at Abraham's birth must have been one hundred and thirty years.

But is not this out of harmony with Gen. 11:26, which says, "And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor and Haran"? We answer, No. The point of confusion is in the fact that Haran, the eldest, is mentioned last, while Abram, the youngest, is mentioned first—possibly because of his greater prominence in the narrative, or possibly, as a little

stumbling-block to hinder us from seeing the facts except as guided by the Lord, in his due time.

That Haran was the eldest of the sons of Terah is quite evident from the recorded facts. His son Lot was old enough to be the companion of his uncle Abraham. Lot and Abraham were probably nearly of the same age, as each had his own flocks and herds and herdsmen. When Sodom was destroyed Lot had two daughters of marriageable age and others already married. This was before Isaac was born, Abraham being then ninety-nine years old.—Gen. 17:24; 18:1, 16; 19:8, 14.

Again, notice the likelihood of Haran's being much the oldest of Terah's sons, and Nahor the second, thus: Nahor married one of his brother Haran's daughters, Milcah (see Gen. 24:15), whose grand-daughter, Rebecca, became the wife of Abraham's son, Isaac.—Gen. 24:67.

Our reckoning as given in the STUDIES is, therefore, sustained by all the known facts, as well as by the exact statements of Scripture.

## THE OATH-BOUND COVENANT

MARCH 2.—Genesis 15:5-18.

"He is faithful that promised."—Hebrews 10:23.

In various terms the Lord eight times repeated to Abraham his covenant. Today's study directs our attention to God's oath, whereby that covenant was confirmed to Abraham. And St. Paul calls our attention to the fact that these numerous repetitions and specifications of the covenant, as well as God's oath attesting, were intended specially for us—for spiritual Israel—"that . . . we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us [in the Gospel]; which hope [expressed in the covenant made with Abraham and confirmed with an oath] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."—Hebrews 6:18, 19.

Thus the Apostle declares that this covenant has not yet been fulfilled and that Christians, no less than the Jews and the whole world of mankind, are vitally interested in its fulfilment. We may have wondered, Why did God repeat the promise so frequently to Abraham, and then confirm it to Isaac and to Jacob, etc.? But when we see that this promise, as a nutshell, contains the entire plan of God for human redemption and restitution, as an acorn contains an oak tree, this explains to us the divine particularity. It explains to us also why this promise made to Abraham is continually referred to by the Apostles in their presentation of the hope for the church and for the world.

The promise primarily was to Abraham himself—"Lift up now thine eyes, . . . to the north, and to the south, and to the west, and to the east; all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and thy seed after thee." Although God's providence led the children of Israel into that land, and although it was given to them by Joshua to be their inheritance, this did not fulfil the conditions of the promise. The Israelites did not have permanent possession of the land. Time and again it passed under the rule of the Philistines, the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, etc.; and now for many centuries it has been under the rule of the Turks.

The Jews have now no more right to that land than had the Canaanites, Amalekites and others whom they drove out, except through this great oath-bound covenant made to Abraham. How foolish, therefore, do those intellectual Jews appear who disclaim Abraham as a mythical character, and who wholly distrust God and the promises that he made to Abraham, and who, nevertheless, claim the land of promise! It is not their land of promise, and never will belong to any except those who hold to the promise.—Romans 4:11-14.

#### ABRAHAM'S THREE WIVES TYPICAL

While Abraham and his wives were all real personages, their affairs were so supervised by the Almighty that they became types. Thus Abraham was a type of God, and Isaac a type of Messiah. Isaac's wife, Rebecca, typified the church, the elect little flock of this Gospel age, for whom God has provided joint-heirship with the Redeemer in his great kingdom, and through whom, as the seed of Abraham, all the families of the earth will be blessed.—Galatians 3:29.

As Abraham was a type of the Almighty, so his wives were types of God's three great covenants, through which all of his blessings will come by and by. St. Paul explains that, as Sarah was barren, so the primary, or chief, covenant of God was barren for a long time—until Jesus came. Meantime, Hagar representatively became the wife, and attempted to bring forth the heir of promise but failed. St. Paul declares that in this Hagar typified the covenant made with Israel at Sinai, which failed to bring forth the real seed of Abraham, competent to bless all the families of the earth.

As Hagar was a bond-maid, she typified the bondage of the Law Covenant; and her child Ishmael, Inspiration points out, typified the Jewish people. They were indeed related to God, but as children of a covenant of bondage. As later on, the barren Sarah brought forth the son of promise, so, St. Paul explains, God's original covenant in due time brought forth the true heir, Jesus—Messiah.

In one figure, all the followers of Jesus are reckoned as his members, under him as their Head, as the Apostle says, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." In another figure, Jesus is pictured as a Bridegroom, and his followers a bride company. This picture is shown in Rebecca, who became Isaac's wife, and joint-heir with him to the riches of Abraham and the promises to his seed. In the type Sarah died prior to the time that Isaac married, which signifies that this primary covenant of God, made with Abraham, will reach its fulfilment in the bringing forth of the completed Messiah, Head and body, Bridegroom and bride. These will be the seed of Abraham, through whom all nations will be blessed.

#### ABRAHAM'S ALL GIVEN TO ISAAC

In the type Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac, through him making provision for Ishmael and for his other children by his third wife, Keturah. In the antitype God bestows all his fulness upon Christ, The Messiah, and through him makes provision for the natural Israelites and for all the families of the earth—all who are to be blessed through the antitypical Isaac—The Christ.

The inspired interpretation is that Hagar and Sarah were types of the Law Covenant and of our covenant of this Gospel age, which gives us assurance that Abraham's third wife, who was taken after the death of Sarah and who bore him many children, typified the New Covenant, which the Bible declares will soon be inaugurated—at the close of this Gospel age. Under that New Covenant and at the hands of the spiritual seed of Abraham, The Christ, during the thousand years of the Messianic reign, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Such is the length, the breadth, the height and depth

of God's love for humanity, and his provision for their future!

Thus seen, God's promise to Abraham had only a partial beginning at Mount Moriah, and the development of the real seed of Abraham had only its start in Jesus, and the real seed which is to bless the world, according to his promise, is not yet complete. Our hope is that this spiritual seed will soon be completed by the first resurrection. Then, the secondary part of the promise, which relates to the natural man—the world in general—will begin to be fulfilled; because then the Messiah class, the spiritual seed of Abraham, in power and great glory beyond the veil, will set up a kingdom—begin to exercise Messianic power and authority and thus begin to bless the world.

Messiah's reign, according to the Scriptures, is to last a thousand years. Its effect will be the binding of Satan, the restraining of sin, the scattering of ignorance and superstition, and the general enlightenment of mankind. Under that enlightening influence, the "knowledge of God will fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep," until none shall need to teach his neighbor, because all will know, understand and appreciate the divine arrangement and the privileges then possible to them.

Under that reign, not only the living will be blessed and led back to health, perfection and everlasting life, but all that are in their graves will be awakened and come forth to similar knowledge, privileges and opportunities. Only thus could those families of the earth be blessed who died, before Abraham's time and since, in utter ignorance of God and his glorious arrangements.

#### AS THE STARS AND AS THE SAND

Only of late have Bible students discerned that Abraham is to have two seeds, exclusive of the Ishmaelites of the Law, or Hagar Covenant. "Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven, and as the sands of the seashore." The stars of heaven fitly picture to us a glorified Christ and his church, the spiritual seed of Abraham, changed from human nature to divine nature, from earthly conditions to heavenly conditions. These are the heirs of Galatians 3:29, and are referred to by St. Paul again when he says, "As star differeth from star in glory, so is the resurrection of THE dead."—1 Corinthians 15:41, 42.

But God's glorious plan will only begin its accomplishment in the glorification of the church. All the families of the earth, like the sands of the seashore, will be privileged to come into relationship with God under Messiah's kingdom. All who will then knowingly and wilfully reject the divine arrangement will be cut off in the second death. But all who then will accept the terms of Messiah's kingdom and become obedient thereto will be gradually brought to perfection, and because of faith and obedience become identified with God and become the earthly, or human seed of Abraham, blessed with human perfection and everlasting life in an earthly Eden.

#### GOD'S OATH TO ABRAHAM

Professor Dodds has ably pointed out that the procedure of cutting animals in two parts and passing between them was an ancient form of solemn obligation or contract—an oath. Thus God adopted the strongest possible symbolism for assuring Abraham and all his posterity that his covenant to bless Abraham and his seed will never be broken. Incidentally, a prophecy was made, showing that it would be four hundred years before Abraham's posterity would have even a semblance of divine favor, and that meantime they would be under the yoke of bondage to Egypt, and then would be brought forth.

St. Stephen, evidently voicing the sentiment of all the apostles, noted the fact that God's promise to Abraham had not been fulfilled up to that time, even though the Israelites had possessed Canaan off and on for centuries. The promise reads that the land shall come to Abraham and to its seed after him. St. Stephen noted the fact that Abraham never owned enough of Canaan to set his foot upon. His reasoning is that after Messiah and his bride shall be glorified as the kingdom, then Abraham will come forth from the dead to inherit the land and bestow it upon his posterity. But the antitype, we have seen, will be larger; for the whole earth shall be the paradise of God, and the land of Canaan, to all who shall return to harmony with God, and through faith and obedience be accepted as the seed of Abraham.

## HOPE FOR THE SODOMITES

MARCH 9.—Genesis 19:12-17, 23-29.

"Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing."—2 Corinthians 6:17. (R. V.)

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old—about the year 1900 B. C.—his encampment was at Hebron. There the Lord and two angels appeared to him as men. He knew them not, but entertained them, and they did eat and talk with Abra-

ham. St. Paul, noting this, urges that the Lord's people should be hospitable to strangers, and reminds us of how Abraham entertained angels unawares.—Hebrews 13:2.

The one in this case called the Lord was doubtless the

Logos, chief Messenger of Jehovah, who subsequently was made flesh that he might be man's redeemer and restorer. The Lord on this occasion told Abraham that Ishmael would not be the heir of the promise, but that very shortly Sarah would have a son, notwithstanding her advanced age. Isaac was born the next year.

It was as Abraham walked with his angelic visitors a little distance that he learned who they really were, and that the destruction of Sodom was imminent. Nobly and generously the heir of the promises petitioned God's mercy on the Sodomites, to spare them from destruction if there were fifty, forty, twenty or even ten amongst them doing as well as they knew how. The Lord gave assurance that if there were ten in the city thus righteous it would be spared.

#### THE WICKEDNESS OF SODOM GREAT

God's policy has been to allow mankind during this reign of sin and death to try their hand at self-government, etc. He has interfered to cut off with destruction only those whose iniquity became very pronounced and whose fond enjoyment of life's privileges would be injurious to themselves and others. Thus of the Sodomites and the antediluvians God made illustrations of the great lesson, "All the wicked will He destroy."

We are to remember, however, that these are not illustrations of eternal torment, but illustrations of destruction. We are to remember, also, that these merely passed into destruction a few years sooner than they would ordinarily have done. We are to remember, further, that the death sentence was upon all of Adam's race from the time when he was cast out of Eden.

We are to remember, further, that Christ Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man; and that in him all the families of the earth will be blessed. This means that all of Adam's children, under the reign of sin and death and the weaknesses of heredity, will eventually come forth from the tomb through the merit of Christ's sacrifice. And that sacrifice included the Sodomites as truly as it includes any of us, as this lesson will show.

#### "AND DELIVERED RIGHTEOUS LOT"

The Apostle Peter informs us that Lot was not in sympathy with the evils of Sodom, in the midst of which he lived. (2 Peter 2:7, 8) His family apparently had been all girls. These, except two, had intermarried with the Sodomites. Quite possibly it was the thought of marrying the daughters to prosperous husbands that, under the guidance of the mother, induced the family to settle in Sodom. How many others like Lot and his wife have made the serious mistake of claiming more for the physical and temporal interests of their families than for their intellectual and moral welfare! The story of the flight of Lot, his wife and two unmarried daughters is simply told in our lesson.

Geologists declare that the region of the Dead Sea, the former site of Sodom and Gomorrah, was a gas and oil and asphalt deposit, with a deep crevice which led down to subterranean fires; and that the connection established between these by an earthquake or by a lightning bolt would have resulted in the manner described as the experiences of Sodom. The gas, throwing burning oil and asphalt into the air, would have produced a rain of fire and brimstone—a death-dealing terror. But had there been no such reservoir of inflammables, the Lord would have been quite able to accomplish the same results by other means, or in such a case perhaps accomplished the destruction in another way.

The intimation of the 29th verse is that God's mercy toward Lot was because of his relationship to Abraham. This view is consistent with all the Bible statements. Adam's entire race was condemned to death because of his disobedience. Hence divine justice owed nothing to any of them. Divine mercy entered into a special covenant of favor with Abraham, after he had demonstrated his faith, loyalty and obedience; but the covenant did not extend to any others except to his seed. There was therefore no reason why Lot should be considered more than others except as stated—that God would show favor to him because of his relationship to Abraham.

#### "THERE'S A WIDENESS IN GOD'S MERCY"

This does not signify that God is merciless to our race, but merely that, having provided a way, or channel, through which he will exercise his mercy, he will but rarely exercise it outside of that foreordained channel.

The channel of all of God's mercy is Christ Jesus, who declared, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Of him also St. Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given amongst

men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Since no one could be saved except through Jesus, it follows that no one was saved before Jesus came. To some this may at first seem astounding, until they perceive that it is the clear teaching of the Bible, and the key which unlocks the wonders of God's grace.

In proof of this, note St. Paul's words respecting the salvation which God has sent to mankind through Jesus. He says, "Which salvation began to be preached by our Lord and was confirmed unto us by those who heard him." (Hebrews 2:3) Again, we read that Jesus "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."—2 Timothy 1:10.

Abraham and all the Hebrews had the intimation of coming blessing through the promises made to Abraham; but an intimation is one thing, and the blessing itself another. The promise said that the people's blessing would come through Abraham's seed. (Galatians 3:16, 29) Hence it could not come before. We should rid our minds of the thought that Abraham, Moses, David and others of the holy ones of the past went to heaven, and the remainder of mankind to eternal torture. The Bible most distinctly declares that the ancients, good and bad, were gathered to their fathers and slept with their fathers. They are sleeping still, waiting for the time when Abraham's seed will be complete, and will set up God's kingdom in the earth, overthrow all the powers of sin and death, and deliver all the captives from the prison-house of the tomb.

#### THE FIRST, OR CHIEF RESURRECTION

The first resurrection began with our Lord Jesus and is not yet completed, because all of the faithful elect bride class are called to share in his sacrificial death, and to share also in his glorious resurrection to the divine nature. All sharing in that first resurrection, the Bible declares, will reign with Christ a thousand years, and as the seed of Abraham, fully empowered, will bless all those redeemed by the precious blood of Calvary.—Rev. 20:4.

St. Paul emphasizes this point in Hebrews 11:38-40, declaring that, while Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the holy ones of the past received indications of God's favor, nevertheless that favor can come only through Christ. Consequently they cannot reach perfection in the flesh and everlasting life until the body of Christ, the spiritual seed of Abraham, shall be completed—"that they, without us, should not be made perfect." Jesus also attested that the ancient worthies had not gone to heaven, saying, "No man hath ascended up to heaven." (John 3:13) St. Peter specializes in the Prophet David's case, and declares, "David is not ascended into the heavens."—Acts 2:34.

#### HOPE FOR THE SODOMITES

The hope for the Sodomites is exactly the same as the hope for all the remainder of Adam's race, except a few who, during this Gospel age, have come into relationship with Christ as members of the spiritual seed. The hope of all the world is the Messianic kingdom, and the deliverance from the power of sin and death which it will effect. With the setting up of that kingdom the work of salvation will begin, so far as the world is concerned, for the salvation of the church to a heavenly condition is a separate salvation from that which God has provided for the world in general. The sacrifice at Calvary, however, is one sacrifice for all—the basis of all our hopes. We were all condemned to death through Adam; and justification to life can come to none except through the Redeemer.

Jesus tells us that it will be more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment (the thousand years of his Messianic reign) than for the people of his day who heard his message and rejected it—the people of Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin. (Matthew 11:20-24) It will not be intolerable for the people who rejected Jesus; but it will be more tolerable, for the Master said, for the Sodomites, because, he explains, "if the mighty works had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have repented," and would not have been overwhelmed.

This shows us clearly that the eternal fate of the Sodomites is not sealed. When we turn to the Word of the Lord through Ezekiel the Prophet, 16:46-63, we have abundant testimony that the Sodomites will not only be awakened from the sleep of death, but when awakened will be brought to a knowledge of God and to an opportunity of obtaining everlasting life, through The Messiah, by willing obedience.

For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of man's mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.



# ABRAHAM'S FAITH TESTED

MARCH 16.—Genesis 22:1-13.

"I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."—Hosea 6:6

Today's study tells us of one of the reasons why Abraham has been styled the "Father of the Faithful." His entire life history, as sketched in the Bible, was a life of faith, a life of trust in God, reliance upon the divine promises. But the final test, which we study today, was terribly severe and marked the tested one as very high, according to any and every standard—divine and human. Evidently Abraham's faith grew stronger and stronger as the years of his acquaintance with God multiplied. The faith recorded in our lesson is so colossal as to amaze us. Only a person very intimately acquainted with the Almighty, very sympathetic and trustful, could possibly have endured such a test.

This test came through the divine command that Abraham should take his son, his only son, Isaac, in whom was centered the promises, and should offer him a sacrifice to God on Mount Moriah. To appreciate the situation, we must remember that Abraham at this time was 125 years old, and that Isaac was the son whom the Lord had indicated would be the channel for all the blessings promised.

We must go back of this, and remember the long years before Isaac's birth, when for fourteen years Abraham had been thinking that possibly Ishmael might be the channel of God's blessings. We must go still further back, and remember the long period before Ishmael's birth, in which Abraham wandered as a stranger and waited for the fulfilment of God's promise, only to realize that his wife was absolutely sterile, barren. Now after half a century of waiting and trusting, could it be that God wished him to sacrifice all this to demonstrate his loyalty, his faith? It was so. He had positive assurance of the command. It was no imagination. It was no whispering of witches or wizards. It was no dream.

To one of Abraham's character, the divine command meant prompt obedience. Forthwith he started. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Forthwith he made ready for the journey, accompanied part of the way by his servants. Then leaving them, Abraham and Isaac journeyed to the top of Mt. Moriah, which long centuries afterward, in the time of Solomon, was the site of the Temple. The very rock upon which Isaac is supposed to have been bound, became the very location for the Brazen Altar.

We looked with great interest upon this rock recently, when visiting Jerusalem. We thought of the wisdom of God manifested in the sending of Abraham to the very spot which he had foreordained should be the Temple site. The rock is surrounded by an iron fence; and it may be seen, but not touched. In its center is a hole, which, tradition says, was a drainway for the surplus blood of the sacrifices, carrying the blood away.

Well we remember how the features of today's study came before our mind! The grand old man, Abraham, accompanied by his loyal son, the heir of the promises, and well acquainted with them, came to this spot. There the wood was placed; and then the father, with faltering lips, but determined heart, told his son of the divine command. There he offered up his son, even though the knife did not strike the fatal blow. The offering was complete in the sight of heaven, and the hand was stayed opportunely and, as the Apostle explains, "Abraham received his son from the dead, in a figure."—Hebrews 11:19.

## THE ANTITYPE OF ALL THIS

These incidents of olden time had their own effect upon the actors; but to God's people, enlightened by the holy Spirit, they have still further meaning. We have already seen that Abraham serves as a type of the Almighty, and that Isaac serves as a type of The Christ—Head and body. Here then we have the antitype. The heavenly Father freely offered up his Son on our behalf, for the sins of the whole world. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." "God gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life"—that in him all the families of the earth might be blessed.

God's great sacrifice of his Son did not mean his eternal death—his destruction. It meant merely that Christ should die to earthly interests, hopes, aims and ambitions, but should be begotten by the holy Spirit to new hopes, to new aims, to new ambitions and to new conditions—beyond the veil.

So God left not his Son in death when he freely offered Jesus up for us all; nor did God leave him in the human

condition of sacrifice. He raised our Lord from the dead, on the third day, to the glory that he had with the Father before the world was—yes, with and to an added glory, "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name." Here we have the antitype of Abraham's offering up Isaac.

## "IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM"

But there is more to the antitype. In God's providence he arranged that Jesus should be the Head to the church, which is his body. Hence the sufferings of Christ, accomplished by Jesus the Head, which ended nearly nineteen centuries ago, were only a part of the sufferings of the antitype of Isaac. Here the Apostle declares, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise."—Galatians 4:28.

The church which God has been calling out of the world since the day of Pentecost is required to prove her loyalty and faithfulness and worthiness of sharing in the first resurrection, by being made conformable to Christ's death. "If we suffer with him"—as his members—"we shall also reign with him"—as his members. The cup which the Father gave to him of suffering and ignominy was a test to prove his faithfulness and loyalty. The same cup he has passed on to his followers, saying, "Drink ye all of it," following my example in demonstrating your love and loyalty to God and for his cause, even unto death.

That the Lord Jesus guards his sheep is distinctly stated by himself. When he reproved Saul of Tarsus for the death of St. Stephen and for troubling the church, he declared, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Saul of Tarsus never saw Jesus personally in the flesh to persecute him, but whatsoever was done to the least of his disciples was done to Jesus. This still is true, and will continue to be true until the body of Christ, which is the church elect, shall have been completed and glorified. Meantime, he that harms one of the least of the Lord's little ones, and he that gives a cup of cold water to one of the least of these, does it to the Lord of Glory himself.

## THE RAM IN THE THICKET

When God through the angel stayed the hand of Abraham from accomplishing the sacrifice of his son's life, a ram caught in the thicket was provided as a sacrifice instead. Thus a ram in sacrifice became a symbol of the seed of Abraham, and an indication of a part of the process by which reconciliation of divine justice will be made on behalf of all the families of the earth, to permit of their being blessed by the Messianic kingdom.

We are to remember that this same thought was kept up in God's subsequent dealings with Israel. Thus the Passover lamb was slain, and its blood, sprinkled figuratively, typically, foretold the fact that there could be no church of the first-born saved during this Gospel age, except through the slain Lamb, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Similarly, the sin-offerings and burnt-offerings of Israel spoke of the necessity for a redemptive work to be accomplished before any blessings could come to Israel, or through them to other nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues.

Amongst the many lessons which Christians may learn from the testing of Abraham's faith are these:

(1) The necessity for the death of the One through whom the blessing will eventually come to all mankind. If Jesus had not died for our sins, there would have been no remission of them. Hence there would have been no resurrection from the dead, and in that event death would have been more than a sleep. It would have meant extinction.

(2) Let us be sure that if Jesus had not faithfully consummated his part of the agreement and laid down his life, neither would he have shared in the grand consummation and exaltation to the divine nature. St. Paul declares this, saying that he was faithful unto death, "even the death of the cross, wherefore [on this account] God also hath highly exalted him."—Philippians 2:8, 9.

(3) We are to remember that the same rule applies to all of the church. It is not sufficient that we consecrate our lives. We must show our loyalty and faithfulness by laying them down, by taking up the cross, by drinking of his cup, by being immersed into his death. Only these will share Messiah's throne of glory. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him."

Be patient and submissive; each disaster  
Will bring thee nearer to thy loving Lord.  
These trials make thee like thy blessed Master,  
Who knows them all, and will his grace afford.

Be patient and submissive; strength is given  
For every step along the weary way.  
And for it all thou'lt render praise to heaven,  
When dreary night gives place to perfect day.