

THE SOUL, NOT THE BODY, BROUGHT FORTH FROM THE TOMB

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust."—Acts 24:15.

When we consider that for centuries people have been accustomed to confusion in respect to the teachings of Scripture, it is natural that the question should be asked, What proof have we that it is not the body that sleeps in death, and that meantime the soul has not passed on to the higher realms? The answer is that in the Word of God we find no suggestion that such is the case. The Bible says nothing about the resurrection of the body, but much about the soul. Repeatedly the Word of God calls death a sleep. Every night he body sleeps, if it is in good condition; and this natural sleep of the body is Scripturally used to illustrate the condition of all who die the Adamic death.

In order to get the matter clear in our minds we must go back to the beginning and see what the soul is. First of all we read in the Genesis account (1:27) that God created man—not man's body, but man. The question then arises, What is man?

We answer, Man is not so much *avoiropois*, but an intelligent being, a personality. What God formed out of the dust of the earth was not man, but merely a form, or body, that would be made into man. Then into its nostrils God breathed "the breath of lives"—the Hebrew term signifying the breath or vitality common to all animal beings. It was not a special kind of life different from that which the lower animals have; on the contrary, it was the same kind of life given to fish, fowl and beasts—the power to live.

The same kind of life is carried forward in the human family that is carried forward in beasts. This vitality common to all animal creatures infuses the body and thus energizes it. The difference between man and the lower animals is that while they have the same kind of life man has the superior brain. Man's head is shaped differently; therefore he can think of subjects about which the lower animals cannot think, because he has a better brain. A man with a head of a given shape cannot think with the same breadth of mind as a man with a better shaped head—a man who is less fallen. Some have lost more, others less, of the original perfection, of the original intelligence, given man in his creation.

A CANDLE AS AN ILLUSTRATION

A careful examination of the Genesis account of man's creation reveals the fact that when the breath came into the body which God had formed out of the dust of the ground, the combination produced soul, sentient being, with personality. The body in itself has no personality, the breath of life has no power, no sentient being, but when the two came together, they produced sentient being.

Perhaps the best illustration of the thought is afforded by a candle. The candle is composed of tallow or wax and wick. The flame is produced by an outside power—the spark of fire. When the spark is applied to the wick, the air begins to combine with the wax or the tallow, and the result is light.

Let the candle represent the body, the air represent the breath of life—vitality—and the flame the being, the personality. God alone can strike the match—create the human being. This life which came from God in the beginning was given to Adam upon certain conditions, certain restrictions; namely, it was to continue forever if man remained obedient to God, but if he was disobedient God would take his life from him.

Adam was disobedient, and his soul was sentenced to death. (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) It was not the body that sinned and was sentenced to death, while the soul remained pure. On the contrary, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The sentence of death pronounced upon Adam affected his soul. As it was the spark of life that produced the soul, so the taking away of the spark of life extinguished the soul. To revert to the illustration of the candle: If some one blow upon it, the flame will be extinguished; thus is produced an adverse condition.

But before father Adam died, before the flame of life was fully extinguished, he had imparted the spark of life to his children; and these in turn imparted the spark of life to theirs. Thus the spark of life has been transmitted from generation to generation. In the illustration, if before we say, "I will blow out the light of that candle," it has been used to light other candles, the extinguishing of the flame of the first candle will not affect the others. But the fact that the transmitted spark of life was impaired is evident; for whereas Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years under adverse condition, his children as a rule could not live nearly so long, thirty-three years now being the average life-time.

IN WHAT SENSE THE DEAD SLEEP

Everywhere the Scriptures state that it is the soul that is dying. The question then might arise, If the soul dies, what hope of a future life has mankind? The Bible answers that from the beginning God foreknew all that would happen, and that already in his plan he had made arrangements whereby there would be a resuscitation, a re-quickening, of these human souls that have died. Nothing is beyond his knowledge or his power. Nowhere does he say that there will be a re-quickening of the body, but of the soul.

The Sadducees of Jesus' day did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. When, therefore, they heard that Jesus had said that all in the graves would ultimately hear his voice and come forth, they disputed his statement as foolish. Coming to him with a proposition which they thought would expose the fallacy of his teachings, they said to him, Suppose a woman had seven husbands, all of whom died before she did, whose wife would she be in the resurrection?—Luke 20:27-40.

Jesus replied that they erred because they neither understood the Scriptures nor appreciated the power of the Almighty. He reiterated his statement that there would be a resurrection of the dead, and reminded them that God had so implied in his message to Moses at the burning bush, when he said, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." The Master's argument is that this statement is of itself a proof of the resurrection; for God surely would not refer thus to beings forever blotted out of existence; that God's purpose of a resurrection is fixed, unalterable, and that those whom men call dead "all live unto him"—from God's standpoint they are asleep, and not destroyed. The Word of God therefore speaks of the dead as sleeping.

Throughout the Old Testament we read that different ones were gathered to their fathers or that they slept with their fathers. Did the body sleep? No, it was absolutely dead—returned to the dust from which it was created. What was it, then, that slept? That which slept was that which God recognized as the personality—the soul. The souls of both good and bad slept; for it is written that "there shall be a resurrection of the just and of the unjust."

Abraham's fathers were not saintly men, but heathen. He was called out from amongst his kindred to be a servant of God. When Abraham was gathered to his fathers in death he went to the same place where they were—sheol in the Old Testament, hades in the New—the tomb, the death state. Of all the kings of Israel, good and bad, and of the prophets, we read that they were gathered to their fathers. They are asleep in death.

POINTS NOT USUALLY NOTICED

When Jesus entered the room where the young daughter of Jairus lay dead, he declared, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth." He did not say that she was in heaven or in purgatory or in hell. He spoke in the same way about Lazarus, saying, "Lazarus sleepeth." His disciples replied, "If he sleep, he shall do well." They had not understood the Master's words. Finally Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. . . . Nevertheless, let us go unto him." So they went to the tomb where Lazarus was.

When Jesus met Martha and Mary, he did not tell them that Lazarus was in heaven, with a harp in his hands, etc.—nothing of the kind. What he said was, "Thy brother shall rise again;" thy brother shall live again. Martha replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day"—the great day, the seventh thousand-year day, the day of Christ's kingdom, when all the dead will be due to come forth. To encourage her, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life"—there will be no resurrection except by my power—why not ask me now? But Martha did not get the thought; for Jesus said, "Where have ye laid him?"

Martha and Mary took our Lord to where Lazarus was. When Jesus gave command that the stone be rolled away from the tomb, Martha protested, saying that since her brother had then been dead four days, corruption must have set in. We read that Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth"—out of the cave where he had been laid. Jesus did not say, Lazarus, come down from heaven, nor did he say, Lazarus, come up from below.—John 11:1-46.

Lazarus was a very dead man; for he had died four days before Jesus came. Yet from the divine standpoint he was asleep, as the Master declared; that is to say, his soul was not destroyed. According to the Scriptures, the soul can be put out of existence. On one occasion our Lord said to his

disciples, "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna"—the second death.—Matthew 10:28.

WHAT CHRIST'S DEATH ACCOMPLISHED

The soul is that individuality which God has decreed shall have an opportunity of coming to a knowledge of everlasting life. All this opportunity is in Christ. As St. Paul says, "For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." (Romans 14:9) He lived as a man, and died that he might thereby have the right to control all those who have gone into the prisonhouse of death. Therefore the Scriptures tell us that there must be a resurrection of the dead.

Our Lord says that all will hear his voice and come forth from the tomb. (John 5:28, 29) In 1 Corinthians 15, St. Paul explains how this can be. He points out that the death of Christ is for all: "As all in Adam die, even so shall all in Christ be made alive—every man in his own order." Then he proceeds to show that the first to come forth will be the church class. He also declares that if there is no resurrection of the dead, our preaching is vain and our hope is gone. He concludes that since Christ is risen from the dead there is therefore an assurance of the resurrection.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

The restoration of the bodies of the billions who have died would be a very absurd proposition. Scientists tell us that the human frame changes once in every seven years; that continually old matter is being replaced with new, so that a man who has reached the age of forty-nine years has had seven bodies during his lifetime. The change of the body did not affect the personality of the man, however. The sloughing off of a hand or a foot or the loss of an eye might have taken place, but the human soul continues; for it is this intelligent human being that has resulted from the union of matter and vitality. God's proposition is the restoration of this soul, this personality. Never does he speak of the resurrection of the body.

The theory of the resurrection of the body has involved theologians in many difficulties. Some years ago a story went the rounds of the newspapers to the effect that the coffin of a man who had been buried at the foot of an apple tree had been unearthed, and the discovery made that the roots of the tree had penetrated the coffin and absorbed the body, and that at these roots there was something resembling a hand, an arm, a human limb, etc. In other words, the tree had been living upon that human body. The apples from that tree had been sold to various persons and shipped in all directions; some had been fed to hogs, etc. Those who hold to the theory of the resurrection of the body would have a knotty problem to solve in trying to fit their theory to these facts.

There is not one statement in the Bible that declares that the same body that dies is to be brought forth in the resurrection. On the contrary we read, "Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it pleaseth him." He will have no difficulty in making a body; divine

power is equal to any emergency. The Sadducees doubted the power of God.

A STUPENDOUS MIRACLE

We admit that to produce a body with the same convolutions of the brain, the same individuality, the same soul, the same sentient being, is a miracle so great that we cannot conceive of it. Yet it is that very thing which God purposes to do for the whole human family—thousands of millions in number.

It is for us to follow the Word of God, to reject all extraneous matter from whatever quarter it may come, and to "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to make us wise." We are to discard the things which are without Scriptural authority. Nothing that man can offer can compare with what we find in the Word of God; the Bible is the very essence of grandeur, beauty, justice, love.

In Isaiah's prophecy we read that Jesus "poured out his soul unto death," that his soul was made "an offering for sin." (Isaiah 53:12, 10) Then again we read, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol [the grave]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm 16:10) Explaining this prophecy, the Apostle Peter says that God would not leave Jesus' soul in hades—the grave. (Acts 2:22-32) The soul of Jesus was not left in the tomb.

Speaking of his own resurrection, Jesus said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen! and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1:18) God raised him up from the death condition on the third day. On the very morning of his resurrection he said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my Father. . . . I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God." (John 20:17) He was the first one who descended to the tomb, and was raised from the dead, and who has ascended far above angels, principalities, powers, and every name that is named.—Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11.

Since our Lord has passed through these experiences, the Apostle's suggestion is that he who brought the Lord Jesus from the tomb is also to bring us. He tells us that we need not sorrow as do those who have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, let us believe that he will bring all that are in the death condition back to life. (1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14) Let us believe that "all who are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:25-29)—the church first. As it is written, "Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the first resurrection; on such the second death shall have no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ; and shall reign with him a thousand years."—Revelation 20:6.

Others shall come forth to a resurrection over whom the second death may have power. Whether or not they will ever get altogether free from death will be determined by their conduct during the time of their opportunity—during the time when the riches of God's grace will be made known to them and when they will have the opportunity of coming back into full harmony with him and of gaining life everlasting.

THE TRAGEDY OF SAMSON

JANUARY 31.—JUDGES 13: 8-16, 24, 25.

SAMSON BORN A NAZARITE—HIS BIRTH FORETOLD—HIS MISSION FORETOLD—THE VALUE OF A MISSION—HOW HE JUDGED ISRAEL—SAMSON'S WEAKNESS—HIS LOYALTY TO GOD—HIS VICTORY IN DEATH.

"Beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink."—Judges 13:4.

All Jews who took a certain vow were styled Nazarites. No one should confound these people with the residents of a certain city called Nazareth. Jesus was a resident of Nazareth, but he was not under the vow of the Nazarite. The vow of a Nazarite was that he would avoid spirituous liquor in every form, and that his hair would not be cut. Samson from his birth was under this vow, which, by the direction of the angel of the Lord, was adopted for him by his parents. In some sense the vow seems to have signified the full, complete consecration of the individual to God and his service.

Twice before Samson's birth, an angel of the Lord communicated with his parents to the intent that the mind of the mother, especially, should be impressed with the importance of abstemiousness; and that thus her child should be born under a favorable endowment. Undoubtedly his parents realized to what extent parents may give mental and physical strength to their children; and they would be alert to endow their offspring favorably.

While the life, the virility, comes from the father, the mother has greatly to do with the stamping of the character.

And in the mother's weakened condition prior to the birth of her child, the father could and should realize the situation, and appreciate his privilege of surrounding the mother with fine intellectual and spiritual influences. Thus the father moulds the thoughts of the mother and leads them in profitable directions, while the mother in turn stamps those high, noble aspirations upon her child, that he may be well-born—an honor to his family name, a blessing to his community and, above all, be qualified to be a servant of God.

According to divine promise Samson was to be one of the Judges of Israel; that is to say, one of the deliverers of Israel. The need of deliverance is evident from the context. The Philistines (otherwise the strangers) resided in the southwest of Palestine. They are supposed to have been pirates, and preyed upon the Israelites by land, as travelers are upon the deep. They were a war-like people, and evidently very intelligent as respects manufactures. Their cunning is shown in the fact that they not only disarmed the Israelites, but prohibited their making any iron implements or doing any kind of blacksmithing work. In this manner they held down

the Israelites in a species of peonage, exacting tribute of them.

A great maritime power of our day still more shrewdly practises a similar oppression in India—supplying from her mills and shops implements of labor, while guarding against importation of war materials. Moreover, modern methods of finance brings to her rich revenues without the outwardly rude and crude methods of the Philistines.

Samson's work for his people must not be measured by merely the amount of damage he did to the Philistines in various ways as a warrior and as a strategist—setting fire to their wheat fields by ingeniously using foxes for the purpose, etc. Doubtless his chief work was one of reviving the spirit of his people, who had become thoroughly dejected, hopeless, under the oppression of their enemies. The lesson of what one man could do when he devoted his life to serving his people and in delivering them from their enemies must have been a great stimulus to patriotism, and an encouragement to return to the Lord and to expect divine favor and prosperity as a result.

POINTS TO BE REMEMBERED

We must not forget that the Jews were not Christians, nor that the rules laid down by Jesus and the Apostles for Christians were not applicable to the Jews. Moses and the nation of Israel, according to the Scriptures, were a house of servants. (Hebrews 3:5, 6) They were promised divine blessings in proportion as they would serve faithfully, obediently, the divine law, which did not call upon them to be saints in the Christian sense of that word, applicable to the church of Christ.

Another difference between the Jew and the Christian is that the former was promised temporal blessings as a reward for faithfulness, while the latter is promised spiritual blessings with temporal adversities and trials of faith and patience, love and loyalty. Unless this distinction between the two ages and the two laws be borne in mind, we shall continually be in difficulty.

According to the law, Samson was rated as a very faithful servant of God. His faithfulness consisted in his loyalty to the divine requirements, to the cause of God and to Israel, the covenanted people of God. His faith was continually manifested in all that he did; and his whole life was used in serving his people. Hence he is rated in amongst the ancient worthies by St. Paul, in Hebrews 11:32, when enumerating those who through faith gained victories and had the testimony that they won the divine approval.

In a hundred ways Samson was neither a Christian nor an example to Christians. In many respects he lived after the flesh, notwithstanding his noble self-sacrifice in the service of the Lord. We should remember, however, that he was never begotten of the holy Spirit. Only since Pentecost have any been begotten of the Spirit of the Lord as "new creatures in Christ." True, we read that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Samson; but we are to bear in mind the distinction and the wide difference in the Spirit of the Lord coming upon the prophet and other ancient worthies to move them to do this, that and the other thing for the accomplishment of divine purposes, or to write this, that and the other thing in harmony with the divine will. Such a mechanical operation of the holy Spirit is wholly different from that which applies to the Christian, begotten of the Spirit, during this Gospel age.

We are to receive the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of sonship, the holy Spirit, which, more and more permeating our lives, will make us more and more like unto our Father in heaven. In all these spirit-begotten ones will be exemplified growth in grace, knowledge and love, by their development and manifestation of the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love.

VICTORY IN DEATH

A woman was Samson's undoing. He confided to her, and she betrayed him. He informed her that he was under a vow which included not only his abstinence from the use of in-

toxicating liquors, but also that his hair should not be shorn; and that if the vow were broken, his special strength and power would be broken. While he slept, his deceitful friend cut off his hair, and then aroused him, saying, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" But, the vow being broken, he was without the special strength which had made him so wonderful before.

Samson's enemies gloated over him, put his eyes out, and kept him as a slave, grinding at the mills. But at a great feat they brought him forth as a trophy. He stood near two massive pillars which supported the roof of the great building; and with a prayer to God he grasped these and pulled down the entire structure, doing more damage to the Philistines in the killing of their chief men, and more therefore for the deliverance of his people, in that one act than in all the other experiences of his life. Samson's faith in God and desire to do his will are continually manifested throughout his life, when viewed from a proper angle. He "obtained a good report through faith."

LESSONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN

One lesson we may learn from Samson's experiences is the importance of having an object in life. No one can get the best out of his life unless he have some definite purpose before him. Parents should encourage their children not to aspire for things for which they have no capacity, no qualification, but to aspire for the best of what they are capable in life.

"Dare to have a purpose true,
And dare to make it known."

In boys and girls between the ages of twelve and sixteen, there is a surging of the life forces which, rightly directed, tends to make of them noble men and noble women; but which, perverted into wrong directions, may make them vicious; or which, discouraged entirely, may make them do-less. Every parent and every guardian should realize these facts, and shape his dealings with the young under his care accordingly.

Not only so, but there is in youth a striving for nobility, a realization that life is as so much of value, that it can be used but once, and that the direction of its start has much to do with the results. At such a time the faithful parent or guardian may be very successful in setting before the opening mind the reasonable obligation which he has toward the Creator, and the blessed privilege of laying down life itself on the side of right against wrong, on the side of truth against error. With matters thoroughly appreciated, the number of moral heroes in the world would be greatly multiplied.

Another lesson associated is in connection with vows. Vows are voluntary matters. No one is obligated to take a vow; but a vow once taken should be observed faithfully, if its blessings would be enjoyed. We are not advising vows to men or to social or religious institutions, but we do recommend vows to the Lord respecting faithfulness to him and to his cause. But whoever takes a vow should remember that it were better not to take it at all than to violate it; for its violation serves to weaken the conscience, whereas its observance tends to strengthen the entire life and to make the individual the more fit, the more prepared, for the Lord's service here and hereafter. The Lord seeks amongst his people strong characters for efficient service.

"Up, then, and linger not, thou saint of God,
Fling from thy shoulders each impeding load;
Be brave and wise, shake off earth's soil and sin,
That with the Bridegroom thou mayst enter in.

O watch and pray!

"Gird on thy armor; face each weaponed foe;
Deal with the sword of heaven the deadly blow;
Forward, still forward, till the prize divine
Rewards thy zeal, and victory is thine.
Win thou the crown."

KING DAVID'S GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

FEBRUARY 7.—RUTH 1.

A BEAUTIFUL STORY—ISRAEL'S HOME LIFE—BENEATH THE SURFACE—GOOD PEOPLE ASTRAY—NAOMI'S RETURN—RUTH'S CONVERSION—WHAT IT COST HER—WHAT SHE GOT.

"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."—Ruth 1:16.

It is said that when Benjamin Franklin was American Minister in Paris, he spent an evening with some of its literary people, during which he was called upon to contribute to

the entertainment. Drawing from his pocket a manuscript prepared for the occasion, he remarked, "Reading a very ancient book, I came across a very charming bit of literature,

which I believe will prove as interesting to many of you as to myself. I have copied it; and if you will permit, I will read it." It was the story of our lesson—indeed, the entire story of the Book of Ruth. The narrative tells that the audience was delighted and desired to be informed where in ancient history so beautiful and idealistic a tale could be found. They were more than surprised when he told them that he had copied it from the Bible; for France at that time, in its official and literary circles, was agnostic, if not atheistic.

The story of the Book of Ruth gives us a little glimpse into the affairs of the Israelites, showing us that there was a deep spirit of religion underlying the surface of wars and captivities, etc., which naturally most impress themselves upon our attention in every history of every people. The opening was at Bethlehem, "the city of David," where centuries later Jesus was born, "David's Son and David's Lord." The religious sentiment of the family is shown by the import of their names. Elimelech, the husband's name, signifies "My God is King." His wife's name, Naomi, is said to mean "The pleasure of Jehovah." They had two young sons, Mahlon (sickly one) and Chilion (pining one).

It is worth while here for us to learn a lesson to the effect that it is never good policy to sacrifice our religious interests for our temporal interests. With all Christians the motto should be "God First." It will not do to say that perhaps they moved to Moab that they might do a little missionary work; for although the Moabites were the descendants of Lot, and therefore related to the Israelites and had spoken to some extent the same language, nevertheless God's covenant was merely with the descendants of Abraham, and the others were aliens, strangers, foreigners, from the commonwealth of Israel, like all other Gentiles. Nor would it have been proper for them to attempt to convert the Moabites; for God had not called the Moabites, but merely the Israelites—as we read, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth."—Amos 3:2.

However, many Christians have made the same mistake that this family made; and if Christians indeed, they were all the more responsible, because the Christian has a higher relationship with God and should have a clearer knowledge of his will and more of the "spirit of a sound mind." It was unwise to take two boys into a heathen land, where they were likely to be contaminated; instead, every reasonable influence should have been thrown about them to preserve their loyalty to Jehovah.

Doubtless Naomi realized all this, as indicated by her words in the lesson, "It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me." Here again we perceive that the hand of the Lord against her was really in her favor, and that it had a proper influence upon her and brought her back to the Land of Promise.

TWO BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERS

Naomi (the pleasure of Jehovah) must have been a beautiful character. This is evidenced by the deep affection manifested toward her by her two daughters-in-law. They both preferred to join her and to go to her homeland, to leave their own home associations; and they started with her. But as she reflected that they would be strangers in a strange land and would pine for home, even as she was pining now, she tenderly urged them to reconsider—to go back to their home and kindred, their habits and customs, and to remarry, etc.

One of them so concluded, and kissed her good-bye; but the other one, Ruth, broke forth in such eloquent terms that her words have become permanently identified with classic literature:

"Entreat me not to leave thee,
And to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,

"And thy God my God:
Where thou diest I will die.
And there will I be buried:
The Lord do so to me, and more also,
If aught but death part thee and me."

When we say that Ruth was converted, we of course do not mean that she became a Christian or that she became an heir of Christian promises; for there were none such until after Jesus, by his death, opened up the "new and living way" beyond the veil. She was converted to Judaism, and this is a fresh testimony to the faithful living of Naomi.—Verses 16, 17.

THE VALUE OF POSITIVE DECISION

One thing here is worthy of note; namely, the positiveness with which Ruth made her decision. It was not a proposal to try for a time how it would go to live in Judea. It was a decision unto death. In this respect all true conversions are alike. The Christian, for instance, did not really become a Christian until he made just such a definite, positive consecration of himself to leave the world, its affairs, its loves, its hopes and ambitions, and to spend and be spent even unto death in the service of the Lord. The value of positive decision in respect to life we can hardly overestimate. Thousands of lives are blighted because of lack of decision. Positiveness for God is the only condition in which we can hope to "make our calling and election sure."

True to God's promise to the Jewish people, Naomi and Ruth were blessed in their return to the Lord—to his people—to his land of covenant and promise. We are to remember that all the promises to fleshly Israel were earthly, while all those to spiritual Israel are heavenly.

Both the nobility and the wisdom of Naomi's character are manifest in the course which she pursued on arriving in Bethlehem practically penniless, and unable to retrieve the interest of her husband and her sons in their share of the land. She did not beg, nor request Ruth to beg. There was no false cry nor false modesty. Ruth went out, like other poor women, to glean handfuls of grain after the reapers. Under the law it was a part of God's provision for the poor that no one should reap the corners of his field, but should leave these for the poor. Naomi counseled Ruth to go glean- ing in the fields of one of her wealthy relatives, named Boaz.

KING DAVID'S GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

As Naomi had surmised, the wealthy Boaz took note of the modest young woman who daily gleaned in his fields; and subsequently he learned that she was a relative through marriage. He pursued the course of the Jewish law, and Ruth became his wife. Obed was the name of their son, Jesse was the name of his son, and David was the youngest of Jesse's sons. Thus Ruth the Gentile became identified with the royal family as an ancestor, and with King David's greatest Son and Lord—Jesus.

The Bible is a very honest Book. It does not disguise the fact that Rahab, the harlot of Jericho, was received into the Jewish nation by marriage and became an ancestor to King David, Solomon and Jesus. It does not disguise the fact that Ruth was by nature a foreigner, a Gentile, and at one time an idolatress. No other book is so honest. Similarly the New Testament, with wonderful candor, tells all the details of how one of his own disciples betrayed the Master, of how all forsook him and fled, of how the subsequently noble St. Peter denied his Master with curses, of how St. Peter and St. John, when preaching in the Temple, were perceived by the people to be ignorant and unlearned.

Similarly the weaknesses and sins of King David and others of the royal family are in no sense covered or disguised. They are all laid bare and reprov- ed, their punishments stated, and the repentance of the culprits noted. We dare trust such honest writers, even as in the history of today we would be willing to trust such writers. Indeed, we do not know of any history today that would compare with the Bible history in candor.

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

In these Studies we make no attempt at impassioned appeal; but rather, in the words of Jesus, we suggest that each one, when considering whether or not he will join himself to the Lord, become a follower of Christ, shall first quietly "sit down and count the cost," as the Master directed. We do, however, earnestly urge the importance of decision, and a positive decision, as being essential to proper peace of mind and to proper Christian progress, and to an inheritance with the saints under the terms of this Gospel age.—Colossians 1:12.

Those who do conclude to give their hearts to God should know that "there is no other name given under heaven or amongst men" whereby we can be recovered to God's favor, so as to be permitted to enter the house of sons, than the name of Jesus. In his name means in, by and through all that his name stands for to have faith in God, obedience to his terms, etc. But when the decision is reached, it means, "Thy God shall be my God."

Decision is reached to join the house of sons through Christ. Be it noticed that we have not recommended the joining of any denomination, nor does the Bible. The instruction of the Bible is that each, to be a member of the house of sons, must be joined to the Lord—to Christ, and through him to the Father—in order to be an heir of God and a

joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Such as do this have their names written, not on an earthly roll of membership, but "in the Lamb's Book of Life," "whose names are written in heaven."

Their next step should be to say, "Thy people shall be my people." And so surely as any of God's people are found, they are all brethren of one family, whether they be found amongst Roman Catholics or Baptists, amongst Methodists or Presbyterians, amongst Lutherans or Anglicans, or whether they be found outside of all denominations. God's people are all one, because by one Spirit they are all baptized into the one spiritual body, the Head of which is Christ, whose Spirit must pervade all his members.—1 Corinthians 12:13.

Not only should we seek for the people of God, but we

should acknowledge and fellowship them, whether they be white or black, rich or poor, learned or ignorant; for "ye are all one in Christ Jesus," and "One is your Master, even Christ."

The proper course for all those who come into Christ is to inquire for and search out "the old paths"—the footsteps of Jesus and the Apostles, their teachings, their practises—and not to be influenced by modern digressions, philosophies and sciences falsely so-called, or by creeds and theories of the dark ages. "They shall all be taught of God" is a promise which belongs to the entire household of faith; and the Word of God is "meat in due season," and is the strength provided for their strengthening, upbuilding and preparation for a share in the kingdom.

THE VOICE OF THE LORD

FEBRUARY 14.—1 SAMUEL 3:1-13, 19, 20.

SAMUEL DEVOTED TO GOD BEFORE HIS BIRTH, BY HIS MOTHER—AN OPENING FOR SERVICE—FAITHFULNESS IN SERVICE—CALLED TO HIGHER SERVICE—SAMUEL THE FIRST OF ISRAEL'S PROPHETS—JOHN THE BAPTIST THE LAST.

"Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."—1 Samuel 3:9.

Today's study gives a little insight into the family conditions of the Israelites at a time not long after the days of Samson and of Ruth. It shows us the deep religious sentiment prevailing amongst many of the people. The Tabernacle of the Lord, in this study styled the Temple, was located at Shiloh, a few miles north of Jerusalem. The priest in charge was Eli. The people by divine direction went annually to worship the Lord, to offer sacrifice, etc., at the Feast time, the Passover.

The father and the mother of Samuel were of these annual worshippers before Samuel was born. It was on the occasion of one of these visits that Hannah made earnest prayer to the Lord for a son, vowing that if her petition was granted, her son should be devoted to the Lord's service for life. Her prayer was answered. The child was born and named Samuel, which signifies In God's Name. When he was weaned he was presented to the Lord through Eli, the priest—to be the latter's servant, assistant, in the service of the Tabernacle and the service of the priest's home, which was connected with the Tabernacle. The word weaned we may properly understand to signify, not the time merely when the child ceased to receive suck from the mother, but the time when he was able to do without his mother's care—probably ten years old.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD CHILDREN

It is difficult to imagine the value to a child of being well-born—born of healthy parents, and particularly of intelligent and God-fearing parents. Few realize the dignity and responsibility of the parental office. Many are aware of the fact that vitality and constitution proceed from father to child—whether this be slight vitality or strong vitality, weak constitution or strong constitution. The mother indeed has to do with this also, since the portion assigned to her by nature is that of nourisher, provider, for the child, up to the time of its weaning.

But the still more important part of the mother's responsibility toward the child few parents realize. The mother's mentality during the period of gestation stamps itself upon her unborn child. Her fretfulness or vacillation or discontent, or her peace, her joy, her high ideals, are affecting not only her own happiness, but stamping almost indelibly her offspring. In view of this, how serious is the responsibility of motherhood, as well as fatherhood!

Moreover, we must remember that the mother's attitude of mind is largely under the influence and control of her husband. He is the provider, caretaker, of his wife. The responsibility is with him to place before his wife, at this important period of life, high ideals, noble sentiments, helpful suggestions, peaceful and restful surroundings. Thus parents co-operating intelligently might produce children even nobler than themselves, as their ideals may be better than were their own birth conditions; or reversely, they may produce children inferior to themselves, while their conditions are possibly more favorable than those of their parents.

The Bible declares that we are all born in sin, "misshapen in iniquity, in sin did our mothers conceive us"; but, as we have seen, these conditions of the fallen race may be accentuated or diminished to a considerable degree by the mental conditions of the parents, their appreciation of their office. But how often children come into the world undesired and permanently marked thereby to their disadvantage through life! How favorable is the condition, in comparison, of the child that is desired, prayed for, prepared for, and whose mental conditions have been well provided for by the parents!

Samuel, the subject of today's study, was such a child—such a man.

GOD'S REPROOF OF ELI

Our lesson opens with the declaration that the child Samuel "ministered unto the Lord before Eli"; that is to say, he was a servant of the Lord by virtue of his being a servant to Eli, who was the Lord's representative and priest. The Word of Jehovah was precious in those days; that is, it was seldom that God sent messages at that time. Perhaps that of the angel of the Lord who appeared to the father and mother of Samson, probably fifty years before, was the last direct communication between the Lord and any of his people Israel. "There was no open vision"—visions and revelations were not then being given. The divine plan was hidden. The Urim and the Thummim answers of the Lord to the inquiries of the people had ceased.

It is supposed that Eli at this time was about seventy years of age—some think nearer eighty. His vision was dim. He was sleeping in one apartment and little Samuel, his servant, in another. The latter heard a voice calling him and three separate times went to Eli to ask what service he could render, only to be told that it was a mistake, and that he had not been called. But by the third time Eli the priest realized that it was God who had called Samuel; and he instructed the lad that if the voice should again be heard, he should answer, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." And so it was. The voice came again, and apparently the angel of the Lord appeared to Samuel at the same time. Then the Lord gave a message to Samuel respecting Eli—foretelling the sad end of the lives of his two sons, and Eli's own death, and that Eli's family should nevermore serve the Lord as priests. The inference is given that Eli's sons misused their position as under priests, taking more of the sacrifices than they were properly allowed in the divine arrangement, and besides this, practising immorality, and thus misleading the people into unrighteousness, whereas, as the Lord's servants and priests, they should have been instructors of the people in righteousness, both by precept and example.

DIVINE DISAPPROVAL OF WEAK CHARACTER

This was not the first time that the Lord had reproved Eli regarding the wrong course of his sons and what would happen. Years before a message had been sent him on this very subject, and although Eli himself apparently was faithful and loyal to God, he had not restrained his sons; hence he was a sharer in the penalty which came upon his sons.

In the morning Eli inquired of Samuel whether or not the Lord had spoken any further, and what he said. It was a trial to Samuel to tell his friend and benefactor, who was like a father to him, respecting the Lord's criticism and pronouncement of judgment against himself and his family; but Eli demanded to know the full particulars, and we read that "Samuel told him every whit." Thus it is often with the Lord's faithful servants; their tenderness of heart, their sympathy, might prompt them to hide, to cover, matters which their sense of duty may require them to speak boldly. In every case the individual's conscience must be educated, and of course the Word of God is the educator.

When Eli heard what the Lord had declared respecting his family, he answered most loyally, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." But however faithful and submissive he may thus appear to be, we know that his character was not satisfactory to God. There are many like Eli,

willing to take, without murmuring, the punishments which God metes out; but the Lord prefers characters that are stronger. Eli would have been more pleasing to the Lord had he had more firmness of character—a clearer appreciation of his duty toward the Lord as his servant, and toward his children as their father. We may be sure that strong characters are more pleasing to everybody. They may in some respects be more difficult to deal with; but, nevertheless, firmness of character is something that is a jewel, highly esteemed by all wise men and women, as well as by the Lord.

Samuel grew in favor with God and with Eli and with all the people of Israel, as they came to know him; and they perceived that the Spirit of the Lord was with him, and that he would be a representative of God amongst them.

All in Samuel's time could not be priests, but only those of the priestly tribe. All then could not be prophets, but merely such as God was pleased to use as his mouthpieces. As St. Peter says, "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit." But, as St. Peter proceeds to tell us, the prophecies were not generally understood by those who uttered them, but were meant to be understood by the church of this age, in due time, as the holy Spirit would make them known—"meat in due season."

As Samuel is styled the first of the prophets of Israel, so the Lord informs us that John the Baptist was the last of those prophets, and that "none were greater than he." It astounds us perhaps to find the Bible clearly teaching that while the offices of prophet and priest were restricted in olden times, as we have seen, yet, during this Gospel age, all who come unto God through Christ may become priests, and every priest of this new order may be a prophet of the Lord.

Failure to discern the change from the Jewish dispensation to the Christian dispensation, which began at Pentecost,

leaves many Christian people in confusion of mind. Jesus clearly presents the matter, saying, "Verily I say unto you, There hath not risen a greater prophet than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

The church is the kingdom of God in embryo. It is to be the kingdom of God after being set up at the second coming of Christ, by the power of the first resurrection, but even now it is God's kingdom class in preparation, being educated, tested, in respect to faith, obedience and loyalty. The overcomers will be the church of glory, the kingdom of glory; but even in the embryo state, these are styled by St. Peter a royal priesthood. He is not in this speaking of any clerical class as a priesthood, but speaking of all who become united to Christ, of every faithful believer anointed with the holy Spirit, as such a priest in things pertaining to God. He is a priest in the sense that he is counted in as a member of the body of the great High Priest. As a member of Christ he is associated in the work of sacrifice, "presenting his body a living sacrifice" daily.

Additionally, all of the royal priesthood class, even at the present time, are God's prophets, God's mouthpieces. These, and these only, are authorized to speak in the name of the Lord. Their ordination, or authorization, does not come by any laying on of hands of bishops or anybody else; but, as the Scriptures declare, it comes directly from God—through the anointing of the holy Spirit. Harken to St. John speaking to the whole church. He says, "Ye have an unction [anointing] from the Holy One, and ye all know it." Whoever has this anointing of the Spirit should be able to discern its influence in his heart and life, and should recognize that it is his authorization to serve as a priest and as a prophet of the Lord; as St. Peter says, "that we should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us."

1914—REPORTS FROM FOREIGN BRANCHES—1914

BRITISH BRANCH REPORT

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

We have pleasure in sending a summarized account of the work of the British Branch for the year 1914. As you will see by the figures subjoined, there is a good work to report. The sales of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES have increased by more than 20,000 copies, our total British circulation for the year being 131,984. Besides this number we sent out to Australia over 26,000 copies, or a total British output of 158,264 STUDIES. The circulation of free literature is also considerably in excess of last year's figures. We sent out of London for volunteer work, for the class extension service and for the PHOTO-DRAMA work a total of 15,787,950 items, representing in tract pages 262,770,280, a huge figure. However, our report does not increase all the way; for the war came in the midst of our work, and immediately began to restrict it—but not to a great extent.

The general colporteur work suffered first, and then the Brethren, as well as ourselves here, were hindered from obtaining halls for public witnessing, because so many were required by the military authorities. But the war helped as well as hindered; for many were much more inclined to hear what we had to say, so that both in the public meetings and to the colporteurs there was a preparation for the message of truth. Also the people more able to buy the sets of the STUDIES were more attentive, and many of these have shown a warm interest in the truth. It must be said that the colporteur work has been very much helped by the recent methods of furthering their work. Brother Rutherford's extended tour resulted in the selling of over 10,500 volumes of STUDIES, and the follow-up work after the PHOTO-DRAMA is also of very great help. It was believed that sets of STUDIES could not be sold here, but now this has become the common thing; and our output of Vols. 4, 5, 6 has largely increased. The war has not made an appreciable difference in the outward aspect of things; but it is impossible that such a state can continue, and no doubt there will be a pinch in the spending capacity of the people not at present keenly felt.

There has been little outward opposition to the spreading of the truth along our usual lines; the Lord has kept back violent opposition, and so we can report the greatest witness yet given here. The outlook is not bright, and we see other factors at work which indicate that our freeness of service cannot long continue. We rejoice in whatever is afforded to us, and we hope to be faithful to our Head until the work is accomplished. The first six months of the year saw little activity in the class extension work, but the advent of the DRAMA came about the time the class extension territory had

been covered; and since then the brethren have been energetic in this newer phase of service.

The DRAMA has now been shown in London and 97 other cities and towns in Great Britain and Ireland, and has been attended by 1,226,650 people, London figures being 25 exhibitions with 425,000 in attendance. Outside London attendance 800,100. The London exhibitions were 22 of two weeks each, and 3 others of four weeks each. The signed cards for further literature, etc., numbered in London 7,470; and so far, over five thousand books have been sold through these. In the country over 12,000 cards have been left, and the resultant sales is about the same proportion. In London the cloth Scenarios were in good demand; in two centres alone 7,966 copies were sold. Thus we feel that this great city has had an opportunity of gaining some knowledge of our loving Heavenly Father's character and plan.

The friends have everywhere risen loyally to their opportunities of service. The Volunteer matter has gone out well—you will notice that we have sent out nearly 7,000,000 B. S. M. The work has, as you know, continued to make increased sacrifices upon the time and the means of the brethren, but the sacrifices have been made to the blessing of increased faith and love among the brethren.

We praise the Lord for all the mercies of the way, and we will keep on with his work till he shall bid us cease. We are going on with such work as is at hand, hoping to do it to his praise. With love in the Lord,

Your servants in Him,

J. HEMERY, H. J. SHEARN, WM. CRAWFORD,
British Branch Managers.

SUMMARY OF OUTPUT OF "STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES"

STUDIES, all kinds.....	158,264
To Australia, out of above.....	26,280
Total British local sales.....	131,984
OUTPUT BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY AND OTHER TRACTS.	
BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY.....	6,932,300
EVERYBODY'S PAPER.....	5,828,200
Colporteur tracts.....	302,000
Hell pamphlets.....	28,250
DRAMA volunteer.....	1,958,000
Free Scenarios.....	739,200

15,787,950

Or Tract pages.....	252,607,200
Books (Manual, MANNA, Poems, etc.)....	3,246
Scenario, paper.....	18,351
Scenario, cloth.....	5,717

Booklets	23,679
Letters, out	35,174
Letters, in.....	31,425

AUSTRALASIAN BRANCH REPORT

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

We are glad again to think that you will be pleased with the year's work. It has been a year of progress as the result of the increase of love and zeal and spirit of sacrifice generally among the friends. Yet we realize that there is much to be done here; and that it may be some months before the door of opportunity is closed for laboring and suffering for the truth's sake.

Last year was a record with its 30,000 volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES; but it has been exceeded and the output has reached over 40,000, as you will see from the appended statement. The colporteurs have done well; and while the war has tightened money considerably, yet it has increased interest in the matters dealt with in the STUDIES, so that there is still a good work going on. We have about thirty colporteurs in the field now, some doing moderately and some doing splendidly. Some have been ever so much more successful since the war broke out than previously. Many more volumes would have been put out if we had had them to supply orders; but, as you are aware, our shipments were stopped.

The PEOPLES PULPITS, which have been mostly sent through the post, continue to bring good interest, and the list of subscribers has steadily increased. THE WATCH TOWER list also continues to grow, which will indicate to you best the amount of progress, although it is still so that one WATCH TOWER serves for may be a family or for one or two readers.

While the Tract Fund shows a good increase over last year, yet it does not represent probably more than half what has been spent by the classes in special efforts under the auspices of the Society. While Brother Gates has been used by the Perth Class for many public efforts, the Sydney class have used Brother O. Walters, and the Brisbane class has served many outlying small towns with several brethren. In this way much has been done without expense to the Society. Brother Nelson has traveled mostly in New Zealand and Queensland, and has been a means of blessing to the friends at those places. He is now in Queensland, and we hope to see him once more at our Melbourne convention Christmas time.

We still have about thirty-five newspapers publishing the sermons. Some opposition has been strongly working against these, and has succeeded in one or two instances; but generally the editors have been able to take it for what it is worth. Some of the editors have been more than pleased with the matter of the sermons themselves, and have realized that their readers are appreciating them. We have heard of many cases of strangers getting quite interested through this service. At the same time we feel that the friends generally do not fully realize their opportunity of encouraging the papers in the good work.

You will find a list of extension efforts and pilgrim public meetings, but this is by no means complete, as we know we have not had returns from all the classes that have been busy. Along this line we are glad to say that the visit of Brother Hollister in the early part of the year was very much appreciated and much good was accomplished, not only in encouraging the brethren everywhere, but also creating new interest. We do rejoice in all the good providences of our God.

PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION

The PHOTO-DRAMA has been shown in Wellington, N. Z., the attendances totalling about 40,000. The class there nobly shouldered the whole expense, which amounted to about £200; but with experience now gained, this will not need to be so great elsewhere. We have evidences, however, that good will be accomplished by this means of declaring "the whole counsel of God" as revealed in his Word. We now have the films in Melbourne, and preparations are well advanced for the work. We feel sure that we are voicing the feeling of the International Bible students in Australasia when we express gratitude for the generosity on the part of Brooklyn in affording us two sets of such expensive outfits. When we realize how much sacrifice is involved in the way of patient toil, as well as of substance by others in the production of this wonderful exhibition, it makes us feel the responsibility of now doing our part to our utmost with what is entrusted to us, in order that the work may be accomplished here. The Melbourne church, though generally poor in this world's goods, has followed the example of Wellington in the spirit of sacrifice, and

has promised eighty pounds toward the expense of the production.

We had our Finale on Sunday and had record meetings both afternoon and evening. Twelve hundred were present and many were unable to get into the Hall. I took the speaking part and endeavored to follow the notes suggested in the instructions. The Lord was with us, and we believe that much good was done. Altogether we have over 200 names of interested. These are now being called upon by three of our best colporteurs, and we feel sure of good follow-up meetings in the same hall for the next three Sunday nights, when I am to give Chart Talks. We reckon that we showed to 22,850 people, or rather attendances; for many attended every one of the exhibitions.

The DRAMA started in Geelong this week. Geelong is a city of churches, hard to wake up. But the Lord arranged to stir them up. The council of churches made a strenuous effort to hinder our having the theatre, which is under the control of the Town Council.

We cannot run several cities at the same time here; but though it will take us a little while to get round, it is beautiful to see the effect and to realize that the Lord is directing our steps and blessing the work.

The work all over is, we think, progressing well, not only in the all-important deepening of the spirit of consecration personally of those who have been some time under the hallowed influences of the truth, but in numbers. These are growing, in some cases, quite rapidly. We hope, however, that while the door of opportunity remains open even greater things may be accomplished. It is good to realize that there never has been a time when it was so easy to get people to think along the lines of the truth; and that the shackles of error are breaking and the mists of the dark ages are being dispelled by the bright shining of the glorious Sun of Righteousness.

While the clouds of trouble roll over the earth in fulfillment of the Word, thus in accord with our expectations, as though the great divine time clock has struck the end of the Gentile Times, we are resting in the promise that our "deliverance draweth nigh" and are seeking to identify ourselves with the kingdom which is being set up and co-operate in its glorious work of turning "the pure language to the people." "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"—Isaiah 52:7.

With Christian love to yourself and all of like precious faith,

Yours in the service of Christ, R. E. B. NICHOLSON.

SUMMARY OF THE WORK

STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES.....	38,713
“ “ “ —Magazine form	1,321
Booklets	2,433
Total	42,467
Free Literature sent out:	
B. S. M. and EVERYBODY'S PAPER.....	1,129,300
WATCH TOWERS	4,287
Debates	1,000
Hell TOWERS.....	3,487
Total	1,138,074

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters received.....	4,370
“ dispatched.....	4,444

A goodly amount of pilgrim work was done by Brother Edward Nelson, Brother Robert Hollister and myself; but the exact figures are not obtainable at the moment. Considerable of this work was also done in New Zealand.

EXPENDITURES, ETC.

Pilgrim, Extension Work, Halls,	
Advertising, etc.....	280:12:—
Postage, freight, etc.....	49:—:5
Rent, gas, stationery, personal	
expenses	56:—:—
PHOTO-DRAMA Expense, Customs	
Duty, etc.....	31:15:8
Supply of Free Literature.....	394:17:—
	812: 5:1=\$3,947.56
Tract Fund Donations.....	827: 9:7= 4,021.55
Dr. to Brooklyn.....	1,597:11:2= 7,764.13

THE WORK IN GERMANY

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

I send you the yearly report, and am glad to say that again, by the Lord's grace, the amount of literature circulated

exceeds that of the preceding year by about one-third. The totals are as follows:

Volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES—	
German	24,136
Volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES—	
other languages.....	1,070
Volumes MANNA	1,079
Volumes DIVINE PLAN in journal form.....	8,770
TOWERS on Hell.....	31,085
Booklets—German	12,946
Booklets—Foreign	2,277
German TOWERS, including 5,000 copies	
monthly to regular readers.....	78,040
BIBLE STUDENTS Quarterly and Volunteer	
matter—German	5,015,200
BIBLE STUDENTS Quarterly and Volunteer	
matter—other languages.....	122,900
The Lecture and Pilgrim Service was quite extensive this	
year, with good results. A number of new classes, of 20 to 40	
consecrated, have been started; and others have doubled.	
Number of Public Meetings.....	262
“ in attendance.....	52,894
“ of addresses for free Literature.....	14,743
EXPENDITURES, ETC.	
Printing, Lectures, Pilgrim Service,	
Rent, Household, etc.....	104,282.16 Marks
Donations—German and Swiss—Eu-	
ropean	58,704.16 “
	45,578.00 Marks

Amount of cash from Brooklyn, plus
proceeds from books sold to cover
balance.

Letters and Cards received.....13,555
“ “ sent out.....6,823

We have quite a large stock of books on hand, which no doubt will be very much in demand in the near future, since the friends are zealously calling attention to the fulfilment of prophecy in the European or universal war. We hope, indeed, to be able to still circulate a number of million copies of B. S. M. on timely subjects before our works this side of the veil is ended. If the six or seven thousand readers of the German Tower in Europe let their light shine out fearlessly, as the opportunities increase and circumstances offer or demand, the testimony will surely have been given according to the Lord's own Word (Matthew 24:24), so far as this part of the world is concerned. We are glad to know that it is even more so the case in other parts, especially in America.

With confidence in God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and with much love to yourself and your faithful collaborators everywhere, I beg to remain

Your humble brother, O. A. KOETITZ.

SWEDISH BRANCH REPORT

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

By the Lord's grace we have passed another year in his blessed service, on this side of the “veil,” and it is accordingly my greatly appreciated privilege and duty to send you the usual report of the work done in this land during the last year, under the auspices of the Society.

Although it has often, even from the beginning of the past year, been very difficult for us to understand the Lord's guidance and to recognize his will respecting his work and its interests in this part of the field, and although we have often been absolutely unable to see any part of the way before us respecting the same, we cannot now, as we look back and compare the past experiences with their already noticeable results, do anything but give thanks and praise to God, when we can see that it is he who, to a great extent through you, beloved Brother Russell, and also through surrounding circumstances and by his Word and its spirit—has directed our steps on the way which we did not know beforehand. It is with deep gratitude toward the Lord for the opportunity he has thus granted us to be, even during the past year, his collaborators and yours, that we now present the following figures, etc., which we hope will help you a little to judge of the condition of the work here.

Down through the year the propagation of the harvest message and the gathering together of the Lord's saints have continued and developed more and more all over the land, so that—in spite of all adverse circumstances and hindrances—the results of our efforts to proclaim the good news in different lines have exceeded those of previous years; and there has never before been a time when we have seen a more general manifestation of the spirit of love and zeal, of brotherly-kindness, patience, humility and faith amongst the brethren in Sweden.

Though several of our most successful colporteur brethren have been kept away from the work during the last three months by being mobilized for war and for other reasons, still the circulation of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES has not gone down, but exceeds, by 3,065 copies, that of the previous year. The pressure and fear of the present war seem to make many people more willing now than at any previous time to investigate the truth. The free distribution of volunteer matter has also made some increase, as you will see. It may at this time interest you to be reminded of the fact that from the start of this little branch of the great harvest work until now, there has through it been circulated 200 thousand copies of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and more than 5 millions of the Society's good tracts.

The number of subscribers to the Swedish WATCH TOWER has grown from 2,174 to 2,344, who have paid kronor 5,636 in subscriptions, against kronor 5,244 the previous year. Regular subscriptions for the year to the Swedish newspapers which publish your sermons weekly have been received through this office to the number of 1,390. In one of these newspapers nearly one whole page has stood at our disposal the whole year.

The regular pilgrim service, in which six Swedish brethren have taken part during the year, has been richly blessed by the Lord; and besides this, a large number of mass meetings have been held in all parts of the land, attended by tens of thousands of attentive listeners, who have demonstrated their interest in the message by purchasing thousands of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES when departing from these meetings. We have also had the pleasure of meeting together with others of “like precious faith” in conventions, on a larger scale than ever before, as not fewer than 18 conventions have been held in different parts of the country during the year, most of them in the summer time. Those conventions were attended by from 30 to 350 truth friends, and every one of them has been successful and spiritually helpful. The number of meetings held here under the auspices of the Society has grown from 1,576 to 1,820.

One of the surest proofs of increasing appreciation and love for the truth is the fact that the absolutely voluntary contributions for the propagation of the harvest message received at this office exceed the preceding year's large sum by not less than 20,000 kronor, and this in spite of the poverty of nearly all the friends here and the hard times.

After all the difficulties and disappointments (caused to a great extent by the European war condition) in connection with the preparation for the presentation of the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION to the Swedish people, we finally succeeded, as you already know, so that the DRAMA was shown here for the first time on September 25. From that day the DRAMA has been presented to overcrowded houses twice every day in from one to three Swedish cities. The interest in this DRAMA is remarkable indeed. We have seen many people standing in the street in bad weather for fully two hours in order to secure a seat; and in the evenings usually from 1,000 to 2,500 people are turned away from the halls in the different places. Up to date we have given 184 DRAMA presentations of two hours each, with a total attendance of 89,650 people in seven of the largest cities of Sweden. As far as has been possible to ascertain, probably twice that number have had to be turned away for want of room, although we have everywhere had some of the largest halls obtainable. Additionally, preparations have already been made for showing the DRAMA in a good many more places before the holiday season.

The 10,000 edition of the Scenario of the PHOTO-DRAMA in book form, which you authorized us to begin with, is nearly gone, so that we have already been compelled to prepare for publishing a new edition. Of the free Scenario in paper form we have sent out 110,000 copies, and it looks as if we should soon need a new large edition of this also. All this seems to us as an illustration of the Lord's words by the Prophet: “Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I shall send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”—Amos 8:11.

As the work grows rapidly all over the field where we, by the Lord's grace, have been placed, the office work grows accordingly; and still the office force here has not increased in number, but has really decreased since the starting of the DRAMA work, in that some of its noble members have been wholly taken out in that new branch, as operators, instructors, etc. The regular DRAMA force here contains more than twenty members, fully engaged in that branch. We are all very glad indeed for the privilege given to us of having a share with you in the “afflictions of Christ for his church,” and also in your sacrifices and sufferings for the truth's sake in preparing the “groaning creation” for the coming “times of

restitution of all things." More and more do we realize that our present opportunities are wonderful and precious indeed, more so than any words can say; and as we see how the big clouds gather above us, and how men's hearts are trembling in fear of the approaching storm, which already has begun the shaking of the present order of things with its institutions and governments, we cannot but "lift up our heads and rejoice," knowing that "our redemption draweth nigh."—Luke 21:28.

You yourself, dear Brother Russell, are always included in our ardent prayers before the throne of heavenly grace; and we pray that we also may continually have a place in your prayers and supplications on behalf of "all the saints," that we all with you may be kept faithful until the end of our race-course and then be granted an "entrance abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Asking you, on account of all the Swedish brethren, and especially each member of the Bible House family in Orebro, to kindly accept their warm Christian love with thanks and gratitude for all that you, as the Lord's messenger and representative, have been to all of us during the past year, I am

Your brother and colaborer in Christ,

AUG. LUNDBORG.

SUMMARY OF THE WORK

Copies of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, circulated at cost.....	43,526
Various other books and booklets—MANNA, TABERNACLE SHADOWS, etc.....	15,678
Total	59,204
Eko från talarstolen (PEOPLES PULPIT), issued free.....	681,300
Other free tracts, free DRAMA Scenarios and copies of the Swedish WATCH TOWER...	135,023
Total	816,323
Amounting in tract pages to.....	16,221,056
Number of subscribers to the Swedish WATCH TOWER.....	2,344
Number of sermons in newspapers, about..	200,000
Number of meetings held under the auspices of the Society.....	1,820
Number of miles traveled in preaching tours	117,837
Letters and cards sent out.....	8,745
Letters and cards received.....	6,987
Total number of various shipments, by mail and by railroad.....	63,505

EXPENDITURES

Pilgrims, Conventions and other meetings	Kr. 21,621.52=	\$ 5,843.65
Translations, printing, binding, paper, etc.....	27,311.96=	7,381.61
Freight and postage.....	4,527.56=	1,223.67
Helps to poor Colporteurs.....	4,211.95=	1,138.37
The newspaper service.....	2,166.28=	585.48
Office expenses, rent, light, heat, etc.	7,108.38=	1,921.18
The PHOTO-DRAMA service.....	22,541.99=	6,092.43
Total	Kr. 89,489.64=	\$24,186.39

RECEIPTS

Voluntary donations to the Tract Fund	Kr. 38,954.43=	\$10,528.23
Voluntary donations to the DRAMA service	15,056.83=	4,069.11
Swedish WATCH TOWER subscriptions	5,636.55=	1,523.39
Sold books, pamphlets, etc.....	29,901.04=	8,081.36
Total	Kr. 89,548.85=	\$24,202.09
Balance on hand.....	Kr. 59.21=	\$ 15.70

SOUTH AFRICAN MISSION

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

It is with mingled feelings that I present the report of our labors in the harvest field for the past twelve months. We are deeply grateful to God that October, 1914, finds us still busy in the Lord's Great Service, and that the year that has gone has been the busiest of our office existence. The Lord has been very good to us, opening doors of opportunity, and we have sought ever to be on the alert to enter in. And now we realize that we stand on the threshold of the kingdom, and that possibly our next report will not be to Brooklyn, but to Headquarters beyond the veil. We are conscious, however, that there is work still to be done here below, and

are determined by God's assisting grace not to slacken our efforts (though we long for the homecoming) but to work with all diligence as long as the day lasts. Pray for us, dear Brother, that the blessing of God may rest upon our humble efforts to serve Him and that we may be used abundantly here in gathering in the last grains of ripe wheat for the Lord's garner.

From the accompanying report you will see that our output of volumes has been largely increased, and that a greater quantity of literature of all kinds has passed through our hands. Everywhere throughout South Africa we find an increased interest in the truth since the beginning of the present strife of nations. Men who formerly looked upon the subject as a huge joke, are now asking with scared faces, "What does it all mean?" We have neither time nor inclination for the inevitable "I told you so," but are only too glad to explain the significance of current events to all who are now ready to listen to present truth.

The meetings of the Ecclesia at Durban are well sustained and the average attendance is larger than ever before. During the year I have made three pilgrim journeys, covering nearly 3,000 miles, and have lectured in many of the large towns and some of the smaller ones in the Union. On these visits I have been much impressed with the growth in grace of the dear brethren throughout the country, some of whom, in comparative isolation, have been growing like calves in the stall. I have been twice to the Transvaal and once to Cape Colony, and am just about to embark upon another tour of the Cape, right down the coast to Capetown, returning by the Western Province.

The Native work continues as interesting as ever, and under the able guidance of our two native teachers, Brothers Jordan and Tshange, this work is spreading considerably in this part of the continent. A dear brother who has been colporteur in Cape Colony reports considerable interest among the natives there, and at their request I am taking Brother Jordan down to establish classes in various centres, and otherwise to assist the interested ones. In Nyasaland the work continues to develop, especially in the Northern Province. I am sending to you an interesting letter from a leading brother there. The Nyasaland brethren have had their faith much strengthened by the fact that a fight took place in their own land, at Karonga, between the British and the Germans, a tangible evidence that we are in the beginning of the time of trouble.—Daniel 12:1.

During the year we have had two conventions in South Africa, one at Johannesburg, already reported, and the other at Durban. At both of these we received much blessing from the Lord, and the spiritual life of all present was greatly stimulated. Our one regret, dear Brother, was that we were so far removed from Brooklyn that we could not have you with us in person. We know, however, that you were with us in spirit and we spoke of you and joyfully anticipated the great meeting at the end of the way, now so close at hand.

The newspaper work continues normal. We have added two papers to our list during the year, but some others have dropped out. The scarcity of material, due to the war, has made the newspapers here very jealous of their space. All over we have much to thank God for, and are inspired by past experience to a still larger confidence for the future, whether long or short.

Permit me here, dear Brother, to express the gratitude to God felt by all the dear friends in Africa, both black and white, for your faithful ministrations, and to assure you of their entire confidence and loving devotion. Our prayer is that he who has brought you through many difficulties may sustain you in the special trials that necessarily pertain to the end of the way and that we all, with your well beloved self, may appear before God in Zion.

With much Christian love, I have the honor to remain,
Your brother and colaborer, WM. W. JOHNSTON.

SUMMARY OF THE WORK

Free literature circulated —			
English	67,650	270,600	Pages
Free literature circulated —			
Hollandish	38,380	135,520	"
	106,030	406,120	"
Newspaper sermons sent out.....			7,720
Parcels dispatched.....			165
Letters dispatched.....			1,257
P. R. L. B. wrappers.....			1,316
New TOWER subscribers.....			30
Meetings held.....			380
Pilgrim journeys.....			3
Miles traveled.....			2,986

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Cr.	£	s.	d.	Dr.	£	s.	d.
Tract fd. dona-				Office expenses..	109	7	4
tions	13	12	0	Freight & postage	42	9	9
TOWER subs....	7	4	0	P. R. L. B. exp.	78	6	8
Sales	87	12	7	Pilgrim expenses	60	17	11
				Grants to native			
	108	8	7	workers	21	5	0
				Bank charges...	2	16	5
					315	3	1

CASH STATEMENT

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Cash on hand,				Total expenses..	315	3	1
Nov. 1, 1913..	43	14	1	Repayment loan.	32	0	0
Local receipts..	108	8	7	Cash on hand..	72	16	0
Loan	7	0	0				
From Brooklyn.	260	16	5				
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	419	19	1		419	19	1

REPORT FROM FINLAND

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

I send you a short report of the harvest work in Finland for 1914. God's grace toward us during the past year has been exceedingly great. God has opened doors all over; and we have tried with our feeble powers to use the opportunities, although we have felt that "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few."

In the beginning of the year we finished the publishing of the six volumes of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES in Finnish; and since then we have rejoiced with our Finnish brethren and sisters, as they have the whole light of present truth set forth in these blessed books. Six newspapers have during the year published "Pastor Russell's Sermons," one of the papers having a circulation of more than 30,000.

The interest in present truth has been growing amongst the friends, and they have tried to do their very best in spreading the Glad Tidings. A very beautiful opportunity was afforded in THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION. The glorious message went out during two months in the nicest form; and every day was a festival.

Up to the last of September the work was going on with very great force; but on October 1 everything was changed, and since that day it has been very difficult to do anything. We have tried to do, but we have had only few possibilities. We see how the night is coming. You know that the sun is going down in the "East." Nevertheless we are in good condition, filled with the best hopes, because we see the new day and how the Sun of Righteousness is rising. We are therefore very happy and thankful toward God, who has used you as a channel to bring us the knowledge of his plan and prospects.

As I think it will interest you, I send a report of the Harvest work in our country:

SUMMARY OF THE WORK

Output of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES.....	22,409
Output of various books and booklets.....	27,622
Total	50,031
Number of subscribers to the Finnish TOWER	1,124
Number of subscribers to the Swedish TOWER	117
Total	1,241
Bibles sold.....	130
Volunteer Tracts.....	479,602
Sample TOWERS.....	46,573
Scenarios	70,478
	596,653
Number of Meetings held.....	862
" PHOTO-DRAMA Entertain-	
ments	218
	1,080
Number of Miles traveled in Preaching Tours	29,986
Attendance at Meetings.....	130,294

A GIFT FOR YOUR FRIENDS

We have a special edition of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. I., to which we have added the Pyramid chapter from Vol. III. It is bound in the same style as our regular editions, except the covers are embossed with a gold pyramid.

The pyramid feature makes this volume specially attractive to beginners who are difficult to interest otherwise. After reading about the wonderful pyramid of Egypt (which is the introductory chapter of this edition), their mental appetite is sure

Attendance at Entertainments.....	80,500
Letters and Cards sent out.....	210,794
" " received.....	4,962
Total number of various Shipments.....	3,892
Total Expenditures....Fmk.	80,319:61 or \$15,477.00
Receipts.....	74,461:00 " 14,348.21

Shortage

I assure you of our deep love, and that we daily ask God's blessing upon you.

Your brother and servant in the Lord,

KAARLO HARTEVA.

REPORT FROM SUISSE-GERMAN WORK

Following is the I. B. S. A. annual report of distribution of literature in German Switzerland from November 1, 1913, to November 14, 1914:

STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol.	
I., German.....	1,694
STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol.	
II., German.....	308
STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol.	
III., German.....	303
STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol.	
IV., German.....	308
STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol.	
V., German.....	224
STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol.	
VI., German.....	287
Total	3,124
Volume I., in journal form, German	1,944
MANNA, German.....	182
Bible Helps, German.....	42
Booklets, German.....	8,344
German WATCH TOWER (600	
monthly)	7,200
	360,000
Total number Tract Pages.....	777,401
Hell TOWER in German, etc.....	6,442
B. S. M. and Tracts.....	314,297
	7,983,500

Total number Tract Pages..... 8,342,200

Respectfully submitted, SAMUEL LAUPER.

"GOULD FREE LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND"

Chapters of SCRIPTURE STUDIES and Pamphlets (WATCH TOWERS, Tracts and Special Sermons), in Brail type, loaned by mail:

Chapters	8,372
Pamphlets	2,811
Weekly sermons mailed.....	3,728
Letters received.....	2,476
Letters dispatched	2,302
Expenses	\$1,106.51

EUREKA DRAMA BLESSINGS

DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST:—

We are sending weekly reports of our EUREKA DRAMA exhibitions, but we feel sure you will be glad to hear from us, though it be but a greeting.

The year 1914 has been a momentous one to almost all the dear children of God. While we were late getting a complete outfit of the DRAMA, yet after a brief season of rehearsal we put six teams in the field, each team serving in rotation.

We started about November 15 and have been quite busy since. Eleven places have been served thus far, which means thirty-three exhibitions. At these the total attendance of adults was 4,159, making an average of 126 at each exhibition. The cost of hall rent was \$105, or \$3.18 per exhibition.

It makes our hearts rejoice to have been able to serve 4,159 people with the message of the ages at so small cost! May God bless you and all in the service of the truth is our prayer, with hearty New Year greeting.

MARSHALL G. ELLIS.—Washington.