

dear Lord bless the compilers, publishers, editors, mailers, and the brethren for their zeal for him. The book is indeed a feast to the children of God."

J. D. G., Ga.
"In reading Volume Seven, 'my soul shall be satisfied as

with marrow and fatness and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips.' I greet my WATCH TOWER with eager hands and thrilling heart; for to me it is the best tie that binds us all in him and brings sweet fellowship."

M. M., Kan.

DATE OF DISTRIBUTION—SUNDAY, DEC. 30

The B. S. M. Volunteer Matter bearing the title THE FALL OF BABYLON, is being shipped to the various classes ordering the same. It is expected that the classes will have these papers by the latter part of December. Sunday, December 30th, is the date set for the distribution of this B. S. M. Where the territory is large and cannot be covered in one day, then we suggest that the work be continued on the 31st and on January 1st, the

latter being a holiday. Please distribute none of these papers before December 30th. It will be well to neatly fold each paper and place under the door or in private letter boxes. Previous to the date set the territory should be systematically divided and each one desiring to work assigned to his or her territory, that the work may be done thoroughly and quickly.

IN RE MILITARY SERVICE

A number of the brethren throughout the country are asking us with reference to non-combatant service. The Selective Draft Act passed by Congress May 18th, this year, provides that no one is exempt from service which the President may declare is non-combatant. The President, up to the present time, has not defined what is non-combatant service, and, as we are advised by a high official, it is his intention not to do so. When Congress convenes again it is our understanding that the matter will be taken up and that body asked to define what is non-combatant service. Thus it is seen that at this time there is no such thing as non-combatant service that is officially defined.

As the law now stands, nobody aside from the President has

any authority to define what is non-combatant service, so then if the Local Board of Exemption announces to any one that they will be given non-combatant service, such a statement is very indefinite and uncertain. In all probability no non-combatant service will be defined for several months in the future.

We have been asked how many adherents to the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION there are in the United States. From the names on our WATCH TOWER list we would answer, there are approximately 75,000 adherents. How many of these are fully consecrated we do not know. There are millions who support much of the doctrine taught by Pastor Russell and the I. B. S. A.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Few realize the amount of work necessary to bring up all the Good Hopes accounts for the year, and to credit individually the thousands of monthly remittances and carry them forward to the voting-share record. Last year it was necessary to use an extra force of assistants for over six weeks. This year we adopted the method of sending out the proxy blanks first, so that each one who had voting shares could fill out quickly and return. It has been found necessary to close all records on November 30th, in order that there may be time to have the individual records listed, checked, verified and signed in time for the election, Jan. 5th.

Proxies, to be valid for voting, must be dated and signed by the shareholder. Have the signature witnessed. Additionally all proxies must be certified by the Secretary and President of the SOCIETY. Such proxies are then Voting Certificates. Even though you expect to be personally present at the Annual Meetings, you must sign and send your proxy to the Secretary so that it may be properly certified and returned to you. Do not wait until the convention convenes. Such delay would

cause confusion and would probably be too late. All proxies should be in the hands of the Secretary no later than Dec. 10th. After being certified they will be returned to you by mail, or delivered to you or to your proxy in person at the convention. Write nothing on the back of the proxy blank except your instructions to the party who holds your shares. Use a separate sheet for orders or letters.

We shall make no reply to any further papers sent out by the opposition. We realize it is only a desperate attempt on the part of the adversary to hinder the harvest work which is shaking the very foundations of his kingdom. We prefer above everything else the approval of our Lord; and the evidence of his blessing upon the work of the past year, and especially during the last few months is, to our mind, abundant evidence of his approval, and we therefore leave the matter in his hands, knowing that he is well able to care for his own, and bring the full truth to light in his own time. We have nothing to hide and nothing to fear, but a great and glorious work to do quickly.—Nehemiah 6:3.

1917—ANNUAL REPORT—1917

When the earnest laborers in the Lord's harvest field have carefully considered this report, we believe it will bring them joy and encouragement. It has been truly said that "Nothing succeeds like success." To succeed in the Lord's work means to have the blessing of the Lord; and "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." (Proverbs 10:22) Therefore the trials which he permits to come to us, if properly received, bring a blessing; and hence we rejoice in tribulation, thankful in our hearts for all the way he leads us.

The year 1917 has been a strenuous one. The nations of earth are in great distress and perplexity as to what course shall be taken, and the hearts of men are failing them for what they see must be the inevitable result. Those who have no faith in prophecy cannot see the rapid weakening of the governments. Revolution merging into anarchy is now the order in Russia, a condition which is certain to follow in the other European nations. The public press quotes Mr. Gerard as saying, "When the revolution starts in Germany it will be so terrible that it will make the French Revolution look like a picnic." Earthquakes, disasters, famine, pestilence, etc., are all taking their place in the time of trouble, in fulfillment of the prophetic words of the Lord Jesus. Such great sorrow, suffering and distress in the world would discourage even the Christian, were it not for the assuring words of the Master, saying, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."—Luke 21:28.

THE MASTER THE CHIEF REAPER

It is the tendency of almost everyone to lean upon some other person. Recognizing Brother Russell as the Lord's

messenger to the Laodicean church and as the Lord's chosen servant for the period of the harvest, coupled with his strong personality, his kind and loving manner, all of the Lord's people of the present time who knew him were led to more or less lean upon him. He was a wonderful man, and wonderfully used of the Lord. It pleased the Lord to take him away from the field of earthly activities, and his passing was a great shock to others in the harvest field. It was the thought of many that his entering the kingdom marked the end of the work.

The year 1917 opened with rather a discouraging outlook. Necessarily there were some misgivings, some doubts and fears. The trials came thick and fast; but with each trial came increased blessing as a further evidence that the Lord is still the Chief Reaper, and that the harvest is not the work of man, but the Lord's work. True to his promise, he "turned his hand upon his little ones," and has "opened the windows of heaven and poured out a blessing" upon his people beyond their greatest expectations or hopes. More and more his people began to realize that the work of the harvest does not depend upon any person or persons, but that the Lord is amply capable of performing his own sovereign will and accomplishing his purposes in his own due time.

THE WORK AT BROOKLYN

Shortly before the death of Brother Russell he had determined upon a reorganization of the office force; and to this end he made several changes and gave directions concerning others. These were carried out; and the Lord's guiding hand and overruling providences in this behalf are plainly to be seen. The reorganization of the office force upon a strictly business and economic basis was completed and is now moving with a

smoothness and efficiency that should characterize any well-managed institution, accomplishing more work with less effort. The members of the office force realize that it is a privilege and not a right to be in the office; and each one vies with the other to do his or her part of the work in an efficient manner and to the glory of the Lord. The same may be said of the management of the Bethel Home. Everyone in both the home and the office is happy; and "the peace of God which passeth all human understanding" is enjoyed by all.

It took some time, of course, to become accustomed to the home and the office without the presence of Brother Russell, but those having and manifesting the spirit of the Lord have learned to lean more and more upon the Lord and to strive to be a blessing to others. That Brother Russell on the other side the veil has had much to do with the management of the office, the home and the work of the harvest on this side the veil, we verily believe. These things were dearest to his heart of all things on earth. He had devoted his life to this special work. He had established the Bethel Home and the office arrangement. Who would be more interested in having these used to the glory of the Lord than Brother Russell? It was his interpretation of Revelation 14:13 that the saints in glory beyond the veil still participate in the work this side the veil during the period of the harvest. Commenting upon that Scripture, he said:

"One by one the 'feet' class will pass from the present condition, in which, though often weary and wounded, they are always rejoicing, to the other side of the veil—'changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' from mortality to immortality, from weakness to power, from dishonor to glory, from human to heavenly conditions, from animal to spirit bodies. Instead of the kingdom waiting for the living members to finish their course, the kingdom work began at once; and the living ones on this side the veil are privileged to know 'the mysteries of the kingdom' and to engage in kingdom work before their 'change'; and as they die will not fall 'asleep,' but will be 'changed' in the moment of death, resurrected as part of the blessed and holy first resurrection.

"Their work will not cease with this change; for all those who will be counted worthy of that change to glory will be already enlisted in the service of the kingdom on this side the veil: only the weariness, the labor feature, will cease with the change. We may not be able to judge accurately as to what features of the great work are now being carried on by the Lord and his glorified saints beyond the veil; but we may be sure that they are active participants in the work assigned to the members of the same kingdom class whose course and service are not yet ended on this side the veil—the harvest work."

THE FINISHED MYSTERY

For years Brother Russell held and taught that the church nominal, Catholic and Protestant, would federate; that they would be recognized more or less by the civil powers; that the church nominal constitutes "Babylon"; that the association of the ecclesiastical with the civil powers is an abomination in the sight of the Lord; that the members of the church this side the veil, particularly during the latter part of the harvest, were typed by John the Baptist; that the "John" class would probably give a strong rebuke to "Babylon"; that the rebuke would consist of a plain proclamation of the truth, exposing the error; and that this work would just precede the settling down of the "dark night when no man can work" in the harvest field; and that "Babylon" must fall. He was fully convinced that such work must be done. At a question meeting held at one of the conventions in 1916 by Brother Russell, in answering a question concerning the judgment and the binding of kings and nobles, he said:

"The two-edged sword means the Word of God. That must mean here [this side the veil], for no one will be smiting anything with a two-edged sword over there. This two-edged sword in the hands of the saints means that while they are resting in their faith, they have the Word of God, sharp and powerful, and with it are able to oppose everything opposed to the truth. All this belongs to this side of the veil. These are the saints who are to execute the judgments written. How? I cannot give all the details. Undoubtedly there will be a great many details when we reach that time. We should be ready to take any part which the Lord may give us. He will give all of his people a share. We shall see what this judging may mean a little later on. The river Jordan means a judgment, and the smiting of this judgment may mean to put the truth in such a way as to do the judging. The Elijah will handle this sword."

Up to the very day of his change Brother Russell was

bending every effort to prepare for the smiting of "Babylon." It should be carefully marked that the message of truth in due time constitutes the sharp, two-edged sword; and that the antitypical Elijah class, otherwise designated as the antitypical "John" class, would be used of the Lord to send forth this message of truth far and wide, that it might accomplish the divine purposes.

Following Brother Russell's "change," an Executive Committee, composed of Brothers Ritchie, Van Amburgh and Rutherford, was appointed to manage the affairs of the SOCIETY until the annual election in January, 1917. Within a short time after the creation of this committee, it was brought to the attention of its members that Brothers Woodworth and Fisher had some understanding and interpretations of Revelation and Ezekiel that might be helpful; and since Brother Russell had stated that some one else would write the Seventh Volume, and since he had stated that the Seventh Volume would come to the church, and since the Scriptures clearly set forth that there must be seven volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, the Committee carefully considered the matter and decided to have the two brethren named write manuscript and compile what had been written by Brother Russell upon the prophecies of Ezekiel and Revelation. No promise whatsoever was made by the committee to these brethren as to whether the manuscript would be used.

Early in the summer of 1917 the manuscript was completed; and after a careful and prayerful consideration, it was believed to be the Lord's will that it should be published and given out to the church. The readers of THE WATCH TOWER are familiar with the fact that it was published, and about the middle of July was sent to all WATCH TOWER subscribers, and on the 17th of July was delivered to the Bethel family. It was prepared under the direction of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, as will be seen by reference to the preface. The name of the SOCIETY likewise appears on the outside of the cover. Upon the title page appears the name of the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, which has likewise appeared on the title pages of the other volumes for several years; and the copyright was put in the name of the PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION. Thus it is seen that all three of the corporations, which jointly are used to carry on the harvest work, participated in the putting out of the book; and its publication was fully accomplished by "the messenger" of Revelation 14:18—the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, which is maintained by the sacrifice of the saints of God.

In harmony with the expectation of the Lord's "little ones," who had been engaged in the harvest work, this, THE FINISHED MYSTERY, the seventh of the series of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, contains a clear exposition of the prophecies of Ezekiel and Revelation. Never has there been any publication which so clearly defines "Babylon," outlines her wrongful course, and exposes her fraudulent practices, as the Seventh Volume. This book is designated "the Point of the Sword," which is set against the Babylonish systems, and which, cutting away the mask, exposes the true nature and foretells the imminent fall of Babylon. (Ezekiel 21:15) The "Point of the Sword" is sharp on both sides. It truly represents the testimony of the two great prophetic books of the Bible—Revelation and Ezekiel. Can there be a reasonable doubt that the message of the Seventh Volume is the instrument in the hands of the Lord's consecrated, the antitypical Elijah class, with which the smiting is to be done? And since Brother Russell stated, "The Elijah class will handle this sword; he will give all of his people a share," is it at all unreasonable to expect that in due time the truly consecrated and earnest workers in the harvest field will grasp the sword, and go forth with joyful hearts to the performance of the duties and privileges placed in their hands by the Lord?

ITS PHENOMENAL SUCCESS

When the book was first published, it was thought that less than 100,000 volumes would be required, and a contract was made by the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY with the printers for the manufacture of less than 100,000 volumes. This number was soon exhausted, and more were ordered. Near the close of our fiscal year the demand became so great—colporteurs everywhere reporting so much interest manifested by the public, the orders coming in with such rapidity—that up to this time we have found it necessary to give orders for the 850,000 edition. Many of the classes, following the suggestions of THE WATCH TOWER of October 1st, have organized for the sale of the Seventh Volume; and hundreds of the friends who have heretofore had no active part in the colporteur service are now placing many volumes in the hands of the people. Many order-loving people, heretofore entire strangers to the harvest message, are receiving

the message of Volume Seven with gladness of heart. If space would permit we could insert many statements similar to the following:

"It is the most wonderful book I have ever read. It has shown me clearly what is wrong with the churches and the clergy; and I don't want to go there any more."

Another said, "It has cleared all the mists away. No wonder I could get no satisfaction from the churches!"

Another wrote, "I always realized there was something wrong with the systems, but never could define the trouble until I got this book. I want to get out of Babylon while the getting is good."

The sale of the Seventh Volume is unparalleled by the sale of any other book known, in the same length of time, excepting the Bible. The classes that are using it as a Berean study report wonderful blessings. It is not claimed that the book is perfect, nor was this claim made for the preceding six volumes. No imperfect creature could produce any perfect thing. A number of typographical errors have been corrected in the second edition. Others will be corrected as found. It is not claimed that all interpretations are perfect, nor would such claim be made for any of the series of the seven volumes; but that the hand of the Lord has supervised its publication and distribution must be evident to all who have been watching the Lord's direction of the harvest, and who have joyfully participated in that portion that has come to them.

We are pleased to announce that the translation of the Seventh Volume into Swedish and French has already been accomplished, and both are to be off the press this month, in Europe. As soon as we can fill orders in these or other languages, announcement will be made in these columns. It is being translated and published by instalments in the German, Polish and Greek WATCH TOWERS. It is being translated into four other foreign languages, and doubtless will be translated into many more soon.

"THIS HONOR HAVE ALL HIS SAINTS"

Brother Russell long ago stated in THE WATCH TOWER that the "penny" of Matthew 20:1-7 constitutes "kingdom honors." From the quotation above made, he mentions the honor that will come to the kingdom class in binding the kings and nobles and in executing the judgments by the sword. He further stated that the giving of the "penny" surely means something that will occur in this present life this side the veil, and that it would take place at the end of the age; that those coming into the harvest field recently have an equal opportunity with those who have been long in the service in wielding the sword according to the Lord's appointed purposes. Further commenting upon the "penny," Brother Russell said:

"We can think of only one way, and that is to apply the parable entirely to present life experiences of the kingdom class, especially those who will be living at the close of the Gospel age, and as greater knowledge of present truth is now coming as a reward to all who will labor at all in the vineyard of the Lord, let us not be surprised if this should be equally distributed to those who have come in recently with those who have been a long time in the Master's service."—Z '14, 171-172.

It is with sincere joy that we are privileged to report that amongst the activities of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY for 1917 the Seventh Volume of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES has been published, and is now going forth. We count this as another one of the strong proofs that the harvest is nearing the end, and that in all probability the Spring of 1918 will mark the beginning of the closing up of all activities of the kingdom class on this side the veil. Truly the message of Volume Seven has caused a great light to shine upon the pathway of the Elijah class, and with joy they can sing:

"And heaven shines clearer
And rest comes nearer
At each step of the way."

CONVENTIONS OF HIS PEOPLE

For a number of years it has been the custom of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY to hold one or more general conventions, at which all believers in the ransom sacrifice are welcome. It has always been recognized that these conventions are stimulating, building up those who attend in the "most holy faith" and keeping their minds fixed upon that great convention of the "general assembly of the church of the first borns" to which we have all been looking forward. Having in mind that we were nearing the end of the way, and desiring to heed the words of the Apostle, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25), we felt that it

would be especially pleasing to the Lord that his people assemble in convention in 1917.

The SOCIETY put forth a strenuous effort to have one general convention at a central point in the United States, with a view to having all the friends assemble there who could possibly come. So many things interfered with arrangements for the holding of such a convention that we came to the conclusion that it was not the Lord's will to attempt to have it. We wondered if we could have a convention at all without Brother Russell being present in the flesh, and yet we felt sure it would be pleasing to the Lord that his people come together. About the time our efforts for this general convention failed, requests began to pour into the office from all parts of the country, asking for conventions to be held. Arrangements were made to hold a few conventions. These were attended with such manifest approval of the Lord, and such a wonderful blessing to his people, that it was determined to respond to the call of the church in so far as possible; and consequently the SOCIETY responded, arranging the routes of the traveling pilgrim brethren and others of the office force so that small conventions might be held in various parts of the United States.

Since August the first up to this time, twenty-one of these conventions have been held, not one of which was held except upon the earnest request of the local classes. Those who have attended can testify to the wonderful blessings coming to them. Everywhere the spirit of the Lord has been manifest, and it is our belief that Brother Russell beyond the veil has been permitted to have some part in these conventions. Those who are privileged to manage the work of the SOCIETY claim no credit whatsoever, but humbly and joyfully acknowledge the Lord's favor in having any part in these assemblies which have strengthened his people in the hour of greatest stress that has yet come upon the world or upon the church. These conventions have not only strengthened the faith of the many attending, but have enthused many to lay aside earthly weights and joyfully enter the harvest field. The requests for such conventions continue to pour in, and we take this as an indication from the Lord that it is his will that the SOCIETY continue to arrange for them.

THE PILGRIM SERVICE

It has always pleased the Lord to have the message of the kingdom proclaimed by word of mouth. The pilgrim service has been greatly blessed by the Lord since the SOCIETY inaugurated it. The meetings held by the various pilgrim brethren have brought many blessings to the consecrated and to the public. The greatest number of pilgrims engaged in the work in 1916 was 69. Conditions became such that some of these are no longer engaged in the pilgrim service, but the Lord seemingly has been pleased to raise up others to perform this part of his work. At this time there is a total of 93 brethren engaged in this branch of the service, which we believe has not been exceeded during any year of the harvest. Below is a brief summary of the pilgrim work for this year:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Engaged in pilgrim service | 93 |
| Miles traveled | 617,186 |
| Towns visited | 6,672 |
| Public meetings | 1,956 |
| Semi-public meetings | 3,287 |
| Total attendance | 850,734 |

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

The army of the Lord has done a great volunteer service in this country during the year. By this we mean the publication and free distribution of the BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY. Two editions have been published and distributed, aggregating 28,665,000 copies. The third edition of approximately 10,000,000 is now enroute to the classes to be distributed on December 30th of this year, and the first of January of next year. We have had many responses to these papers, testifying that they have brought blessings to many hearts.

OTHER BRANCHES OF THE WORK

The PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION has been shown during the year at various places, and interest in it still continues, the total attendance for the year being 292,338. The number of productions was 678. The Eureka Drama productions were 901 and the total attendance 62,483.

Since it is contrary to the terms of the Charter of our Association for the SOCIETY to engage in the manufacture and sale of Angelophone machines, it became necessary to put this branch of work in other hands, and it is still continuing. It being entirely in harmony, however, for the SOCIETY to still manufacture and sell the records for the Angelophone, arrangements were made with the brother who took over the Angelophone Company, whereby the SOCIETY finances the reproduction of the records. These new records

have proven very satisfactory, and furnish another means that the Lord is using to give the message of glad tidings to those having hearing ears.

The pastoral work has been greatly blessed during the year. For the year 1916 there were 350 classes engaged in the pastoral work. During the first part of the year 1917 there was a slight increase, but later in the year more classes engaged in it, and the total number engaged in pastoral work for 1917 was 924. The results have been very gratifying, many hearing the truth and making full consecration and symbolizing this consecration; a number of new Berean Bible classes have been established.

THE COLPORTEUR WORK

Many of the dear brethren who heretofore have been engaged in the colporteur work were compelled to engage in secular business in order to provide themselves with the necessities of life. Consequently during the year 1916 there were only 372 colporteurs. During the year 1917 this number has been increased to 461, regularly engaged in colporteur service. Added to this, 355 classes have duly organized and are carrying on the special colporteur work. By this means the county where the class is located is divided into smaller sections, and everyone of the consecrated who desires to have a part in this work is assigned to a small district until he has finished, and then assigned to another district until the territory is entirely covered. Some of the classes have as many as 100 engaged in the colporteur work, many of whom have never before had any experience; but they report some very splendid results and many blessings of the Lord. If we count 10 members as the average of a class doing the colporteur work, we have 3550 special colporteurs and 461 regular colporteurs, which at this time would aggregate 4011 engaged in the colporteur work; and from the daily reports coming to the office we anticipate this number will more than double very shortly. We give below a comparative summary of the output of the various publications for the years 1915, 1916 and 1917:

| | 1915 | 1916 | 1917 |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| STUDIES (English and foreign) | 362,344 | 265,495 | 574,838 |
| Drama Scenarios (bound books) | 55,630 | 70,000 | 87,567 |
| Mannas and other books | 53,355 | 42,000 | 95,898 |
| Booklets (English and foreign) | 88,447 | 110,000 | 191,719 |
| THE WATCH TOWER (24 issues) | 1,272,000 | 1,128,000 | 1,211,000 |
| German WATCH TOWER (12 issues) | 24,000 | 24,000 | 25,000 |
| Polish WATCH TOWER (12 issues) | 24,000 | 17,000 | 19,000 |

Our correspondence for this year has been unusually heavy. We have endeavored with the well-organized office force to handle this as rapidly as possible.

Number of letters received during the fiscal year, 203,686

" " " sent out during the fiscal year, 167,154

AUDITORS' REPORT

At various times heretofore the books of the SOCIETY have been audited by a committee selected by Brother Russell for that purpose. At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors an auditing committee was selected and notified to come to the office and make thorough examination and audit of the books and accounts of the SOCIETY. The report of this auditing committee appears below and speaks for itself:

The undersigned committee, upon request of the President and the Secretary-Treasurer of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, submit the following report:

On the 8th day of December, 1917, an examination of the books of the SOCIETY was made at the office in the Brooklyn Tabernacle, 13-17 Hicks Street, Brooklyn, N. Y., said examination covering the period of the fiscal year, Nov. 1, 1916 to the close of business, Oct. 31, 1917.

The books were found in excellent condition, accurately kept, with the accounts stated fully and clearly.

The SOCIETY's cash was found to be properly deposited in banks, trust companies and safety deposit vaults.

The system of accounting used in the office seems admirably adapted for the purpose of the SOCIETY. The office has been organized on an excellent efficiency basis, the space, material and personnel being used in a manner that commands our highest commendation.

With our knowledge of corporations doing large business, we doubt whether it would be possible to find elsewhere the same amount of business transacted with the same number of employees.

Every feature of the office work, the forms used, and the methods employed, bespeak the utmost economy in time and money.

The committee finds the stock of books and other literature kept in an orderly manner, and that the amount of stock is kept at the lowest point consistent with good

management, and that the movement of the stock is expedited by every known means.

The transportation of large shipments to various parts of the country is made expeditious and economical, wherever possible, by forwarding direct from the factory.

The record of voting shares kept by the Secretary-Treasurer we find to be complete and accurate.

ELIOT H. THOMSON,
General Bookkeeper, Washington Loan & Trust Company, Washington, D. C.

HARRY J. ALDRICH,
Efficiency Engineer, Spencer Kellogg & Sons, Incorporated, Buffalo, N. Y.

CLAYTON J. WOODWORTH,
Vice-President and Auditor, Foster Correspondence Schools, Scranton, Pa.

FINANCIAL CONDITION

Never during the harvest has the Lord's approval and loving kindness been made more manifest in his provision for the carrying on of his work than during this year. At the beginning of the fiscal year the contributions came rather slowly. For the first four months they were about like the first part of 1915; but in the latter part of the fiscal year, particularly from August until the close of the year on October 31st, 1917, contributions to the Tract Fund greatly increased, and by comparing this with the previous reports published in THE WATCH TOWER it will be seen that for the fiscal year 1917 the contributions exceeded any yet in the history of the SOCIETY, with the exception of the two phenomenal years of 1913 and 1914. The zeal and earnestness manifested by the friends in sending in their sacrifices has been an inspiration to those who have read their communications. We append hereto a copy of the financial statement issued by the auditing committee, which is self-explanatory:

The audit of the books of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY for the fiscal year ending October 31, 1917, is in detail as follows:

| Receipts | |
|---|--------------|
| Good Hopes and Tract Fund | |
| Donations | \$219,545.41 |
| Expenditures | |
| Pilgrim Service | \$27,700.63 |
| Free Literature, Books, etc. | 54,544.20 |
| Sent to Foreign Fields | 24,512.20 |
| Pastoral Work | 282.24 |
| Various Conventions | 2,866.00 |
| Repayment of advances made in 1915 (See Z. '15-373 and '16-389. | |
| \$100,713.09 minus \$20,000.00) | 80,713.09 |
| Balance on hand | 28,927.05 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$219,545.41 |

[Signed] ELIOT H. THOMSON
HARRY J. ALDRICH
CLAYTON J. WOODWORTH

It is proper that we mention the fact that by reference to the report for 1915 it will be seen that the SOCIETY borrowed a large sum. It will be observed on the financial sheet of 1917 that after repaying this amount there is still a balance of the approximate sum of \$28,000 to the credit of the Good Hopes fund. It should be observed, however, that the needs of the foreign branches are such that it has been necessary for us to remit to them a goodly amount since the close of the fiscal year. It is also necessary for us to carry a large stock of paper in order that we may have our books and tracts promptly manufactured. During the month of November alone it was necessary for us to order 18 carloads of paper at an average cost of \$2,000.00 per car. Paper this year is much higher than it has been in previous years. It will thus be seen by reference to the financial report that the SOCIETY is in a healthy financial condition, but as it has always been the policy of the SOCIETY to use the money as it came in, the preparation for the work in the near future will quickly absorb the balance to the credit of the Good Hopes fund. Our future operations will be governed as the Lord may indicate by providing the means.

We are pleased to announce that the Brooklyn Tabernacle and the Bethel Home are free from all debt or encumbrance, and since the disposition of the New York City Temple, which was heavily mortgaged, the SOCIETY has no debts upon which it is required to pay interest.

For all the Lord's leadings and blessings in this behalf we are indeed grateful, and to him we give all the credit and praise for every feature of the service.

REFERENDUM VOTE

As heretofore announced in THE WATCH TOWER, upon the

suggestion of others the classes were asked to meet at their respective places of assembly on the 21st day of November, and cast a referendum vote as to who should constitute the servants of the SOCIETY in the capacity of Directors and officers for the ensuing year. The following well known brethren; namely, E. H. Thomson, Gen. W. P. Hall, and J. T. D. Pyles, of Washington, D. C., consented to act as a committee to receive and tabulate the vote, and report. Some of the classes laboring under a misapprehension, as we are advised, neglected to take that vote; but the classes voting and thus far reported to the committee, show returns as given below:

Washington, D. C., Dec. 13, 1917.

To the Officers and Directors of the
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY,
Brooklyn, New York.

DEAR BRETHREN:

We report herewith the returns from 813 ecclesias who have sent to this committee the results of the advisory election for Directors and Officers of the SOCIETY, as suggested in THE WATCH TOWER of November 1, 1917.

| Candidate | Director | Pres. | Vice-Pres. | Sec'y-Treas. |
|--|----------|--------|------------|--------------|
| J. F. Rutherford..... | 10,990 | 10,869 | 14 | 3 |
| W. E. Van Amburgh..... | 10,909 | 14 | 418 | 10,700 |
| G. H. Fisher..... | 10,333 | 4 | 395 | 30 |
| J. A. Bohnet..... | 10,323 | 1 | 126 | 4 |
| A. H. Macmillan..... | 10,204 | 2 | 1,856 | 102 |
| W. E. Spill..... | 9,880 | | 183 | 1 |
| A. N. Pierson..... | 8,888 | 49 | 5,722 | 13 |
| C. J. Woodworth..... | 1,776 | 28 | 328 | 2 |
| M. Sturgeon..... | 680 | 376 | 73 | 36 |
| A. I. Ritchie..... | 548 | 10 | 223 | 21 |
| R. H. Hirsch..... | 469 | 1 | 2 | 25 |
| I. H. Hoskins..... | 459 | | | 3 |
| J. D. Wright..... | 444 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| H. O. Rockwell..... | 342 | 1 | 13 | 209 |
| R. J. Martin..... | 293 | 17 | 73 | 7 |
| W. F. Hudgings..... | 181 | | 30 | 14 |
| A. E. Burgess..... | 143 | | 9 | 11 |
| P. S. L. Johnson..... | 126 | 20 | 25 | 19 |
| E. W. Brenneisen..... | 100 | 1 | 4 | 8 |
| 89 others receiving less than 100 votes..... | 1,036 | 26 | 182 | 94 |

TOTAL VOTES CAST.... 11,421 9,680 11,802

Fifty-five classes reported that they were unable or unwilling to vote.

A final report, to include belated returns from foreign points, will be submitted at the annual meeting in January next.

[Signed] J. T. D. PYLES
W. P. HALL
ELLIOT H. THOMSON.

FOREIGN WORK

The harvest work in the foreign field still has the Lord's blessing, notwithstanding the great stress. In Germany the pilgrim service, colporteur work and the harvest work in general are still progressing. The Bible House is maintained, but its management from the headquarters is conducted through a representative of the SOCIETY in a neutral country. The work in general is in very good condition, we are pleased to report.

The first public meeting held in Holland was in the summer of 1913. Considerable interest was then manifested, and now we have two representatives in Holland and much interest in the Lord's cause is being aroused.

The condition of the work in other foreign fields will appear from the reports, some of which are published below, and others will be published in subsequent issues.

REPORT OF BRITISH BRANCH

DEAR BROTHER RUTHERFORD:—

I have pleasure in enclosing a summary of the output of books and tracts in the British Harvest Field during the year which ended with us on October 31st last, the memorial to us of our dear Brother Russell's death. I have also the pleasure of giving you herewith a brief review of the year's work. The year has been in some ways the strangest of years for us. We have had our trials and difficulties; and these have come in unexpected ways, and from unexpected quarters. But the year has been one of the best that we have had in the whole of our experience in the harvest work, and we have very much for which to thank the Lord. Looking at the figures which we are enabled to report, we are surprised that during the third year of the great European war we are able to show so good a report. The pressure of the Military Service Act began to be felt at the opening of our financial year, and it has continued. Our young men, those who made in almost every ecclesia the dynamic force of the class, have been taken away from us. The Chief Reaper has seen fit to take them out of the harvest field, and he has placed them in strange situations. Many of them are to-

gether in various settlements in the country, and they are enabled to look back over their experiences, and in many cases they are enabled to "try" one another. Also they have the privilege of gladly helping each other toward that rounding out of the character which the Master desires to have. It seems as if the general experience of the harvest work this year has emphasized this latter feature: probably the harvesters have more than at any time felt that the benefit of the work was for themselves rather than those for whom they seemed to labor.

I will now give you a brief account of the various branches of the work, beginning with the

Pilgrim Service

In this branch of the work we report with pleasure, and with thankfulness of heart to our heavenly Father, a considerable increase of activity. We were, by the favour of the Lord, able to use the time and talents of good, loyal brethren who had, if not the whole time, at least a considerable portion of their time free for this service. The result is that there has been more visitation of the British classes than at any time in the history of the harvest work. The letters from all the classes are full of gratitude and appreciation of the labour and ministry of our pilgrim brethren; and it is abundantly evident that the blessing of the Lord has been with us in this branch of the service. There is a very close bond of union between the brethren in this country at this time; and we believe the Lord will bless us even more abundantly.

Colporteur Work

The colporteur work has not been so brisk as last year, nor indeed as brisk, we think, as it might have been. We give all honour to the dear brethren who have continued in that work, and who have wrought so hard and so well. Our output of books is 62,685, which is only 9,000 less than last year. Most of these books have, of course, been put out by the colporteurs, and a fair proportion of them have been sold in the Drama follow-up work.

Volunteer Work

Our output of volunteer literature has fallen considerably. There are two main factors in this decline: the fact that our workers are depleted—many active young men who engaged in this work having been taken away from us—and the shortage of paper. In the early part of the year it was almost impossible to buy paper, and the price asked was very heavy. Then we did not receive our copy from America for quite a while, and thus we thought it might not be the Lord's will for us to force open a door. However, as soon as the Lord gave liberty, we hurried the work forward; and our brethren speedily got out a good edition of the "World on Fire," B. S. M. No. 91. Altogether a total of 3,300,000 has been distributed during the year. Our output of tracts, including those to advertise the Drama, is 4,100,000, which may be said to be about one-third of a late average good year.

PHOTO-DRAMA

The Drama has done well, though we must use that word in a comparative sense. It seemed as if its days here were numbered. There was nothing doing. But in late Spring, the Lord opened the way. One of our dear brethren who had conditional exemption from the Military Service wrought hard and long, and we have been able, by his and other willing service, to run one exhibition, as might be said, almost continuously; that is, we have taken one exhibition to a town, evening only, for four days, concluding with the finale on Sundays. The results have been very gratifying, almost as good as if we had had an eight days show with two exhibitions per day. Even in this limited way we have had over 9,000 names for colporteur calls; and very good results have, on the whole, been obtained. It seems as if the Lord were about to open the Drama door a little wider, and there is a possibility of a good witness yet being given by this means. The Photo-Drama is very acceptable everywhere. Any town would take it regularly; and it would be a continuous attraction, though of course we seek to do that which is best in the general interests of the harvest field.

Pastoral Work

The pastoral work is new to us this year, and we on this side were late in starting. For several reasons it seemed impossible to begin until the year was well advanced. The number of classes which have taken up this work is seventy-eight; and though our reports are not all that we can desire in showing results, yet we know that the Lord has blessed the work very much. There are many today who are fully consecrated to the Lord but who, before they were visited by the pastoral workers, did not know the way of consecration, even though their hearts were leaning towards the Lord, and

who did not know the joy of his glorious plan. Our hearts are made glad as we think of the blessings which have come through this work. The sisters are rejoicing in their opportunities of service, and the Lord is blessing them very much.

Finance

The financial side of the work has been easy; for there has been no difficulty whatever here. The contributions of the Lord's people to the work have not stopped; and the brethren generally have expressed their confidence that the office still represented the Lord's work, and that the Lord would take care of that which was committed to him. This has been shown by an increase of over £1000 compared with last year, and we have been very thankful for these indications of the Lord's good pleasure.

Seventh Volume

There is one feature of the work which remains to be mentioned—the Seventh Volume. We should have been very pleased if we could have reported to you that the brethren had this in hand, and that its message was being spread. As you know we could not get this circulated here because of lack of the necessary plates. At the time of writing the plates are not yet in hand, and it may be that there will be difficulties in getting them through the importation burrage. However, this matter is in the Lord's hands, and we quite understand that it is of his providence that the plates are on this side and so near to us. Paper also is a difficulty. We ordered paper many months ago, but we have not yet got a delivery of it. However, no doubt the paper will be ready just about the time when the plates are ready; and then when we are through with the printing and other little difficulties—and the printers and binders are very busy with the trashy books which fill our book-stalls—we shall hope to put the Seventh Volume in circulation in time to get it into the hearts of the brethren and into the hands of those to whom the Lord would send it.

We would urge the dear British brethren who read this report, and who have ability to serve in the colporteur work, to consider very specially in the sight of the Lord the privilege of this work before the hours of service are ended. Those who cannot enter into that work directly may still do so by praying the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his service; for still it is true the harvest is great, but the laborers are few.

The general condition of the country is one of prosperity; and certainly it is true that there are weary hearts to comfort, hungry souls to be fed as never before. The devastating effects of this terrible war are making many long for something they feel ought to be there, but which they do not get. They have asked for bread; they got a stone. We are thankful for signs of a movement towards an increase of work in the colporteur field, and we believe that there will yet be a good work done.

THE WATCH TOWER continues to be welcomed as always; and the brethren receive it as they have been accustomed to do, as the channel conveying to them the Lord's blessing. We regularly pray that the Lord will bless this channel to His people, that they may be fed and led. The spiritual health of the brethren continues good. The Tabernacle congregation continues with one heart and mind, waiting upon the Lord; and the congregations in the larger centres—Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Oldham and Bristol—are continuing in the way of the Lord in faith and patient labor. The many other classes are laboring as faithfully and patiently, and we should be glad to mention them all to you. It is a pleasure to us to think that you know so many of the British friends, and that you are familiar with British conditions.

It has been a pleasure to me as I have visited the British friends to find them loyal to the SOCIETY and to yourself as its President elected by the brethren to that high privilege of service. Whenever you can find in the Lord's providence an opportunity of coming over here, you will be heartily welcomed by us all. The London Bethel family send warm love to you, and to their brethren in the Brooklyn Bethel; so would all the British friends if they had the opportunity.

Believing that the Lord has much work to be done, I count it a great privilege from the Lord to be enabled to report thus to you, and with warm love and loyalty, I am,

Yours in the Master's grace and service, J. HEMERY.

REPORT OF FRENCH AND SWISS BRANCH

DEAR BROTHER RUTHERFORD:—

It is a blessed privilege to give here a full report of the French work—Nov. 1, 1916, to Oct. 31, 1917. Not only have the ecclesias increased in number during this year, but the dear friends understand better than ever before the deep things of consecration to the Lord. It is our endeavor to

keep the Lord's people busy in the harvest field, so that all their spare time is devoted to this work. Whenever a new B. S. M. is issued, the friends hold special prayer meetings, and then on the same day they distribute the good tidings in every part of the French harvest field. Thus the work is supported by the continued prayers of the saints, and the blessing has been much greater than ever before. We do the same for Photo-Drama showings and for public lectures.

During the year the French work has made much progress, especially in the unity of spirit amongst the brethren. The distribution of free literature is much larger than that of last year—the output this year having been 210,000 tracts more than last year. The attendance at public lectures has been excellent—about 5,000 more than last year. The increase in the number of volumes sold was 1,300. This year we are publishing Vol. 3, and Vol. 7 is now on the press. Early in the incoming year we hope to publish Vol. 4. We shall then have all the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES in French. For this great blessing we are very thankful to the Lord.

General Report for the Year

| | |
|--|---------|
| Letters and Cards received | 3,230 |
| Letters and Card dispatched | 2,147 |
| Packages and Parcels dispatched | 2,121 |
| SCRIPTURE STUDIES sold | 2,735 |
| Booklets sold | 3,715 |
| Tracts distributed | 418,217 |
| Total attendance at pilgrim meetings and at Photo-Drama showings | 56,550 |

Financial Report

| Receipts | Expenditures |
|--|--|
| Donations received and stock on hand | For books, tracts, etc.. 30,450.02 Fr. |
| 30,519.88 Fr. | Balance |
| | 69.86 " |
| | 30,519.88 Fr. |

30,519.88 Fr.
With much Christian love, I am,
Your Brother and servant in the Lord, A. FREYTAG.

AUSTRALASIAN BRANCH REPORT

DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST:—

Just one year has passed since we became bereft of our dear Brother Russell; and while we still have his beautiful words of comfort, revelation of the Scripture and guidance, yet even though so far away from the centre of the work, how greatly have we missed his influence! Yet we realize that the Lord has been with us and that while we have not put out so many volumes as previously, yet there has really been more interest discovered through the various methods of work in vogue.

We have lost some colporteurs through sickness, death and other circumstances. This accounts for the small output; for some of the workers have done better this year than ever before. At times local conditions have made it difficult to place the volumes in the homes. But generally the people have more money now than ever, and it is usually easier to get a hearing and stir interest. We are glad that there is still a prospect of more laborers entering the field, and trust that much may yet be done in sending out the Truth.

The shipping difficulties which interfered with the colporteur work also interfered with the volunteer work, so that we have fallen below the million mark. What has been done, however, has been done well. Our work of sending through the post to all out-lying towns and districts has resulted in interest being found in parts which could never have been reached by hand distribution or by colporteurs.

Classes have been gradually increasing and numbers attending the old established classes have also been added to. The great distances make it very difficult to operate any frequent pilgrim service, but we have done what we could. The main classes have been visited; and this has meant the traveling by land and sea of several thousands of miles. We hope, however, that this service may be extended if the Lord wills, as classes are now gathering up a little better to make calls en route to the distant ones.

Our experience seems to have been in line with yours in regard to the increase in donations to the Tract Fund, so that you will notice we have been enabled to substantially reduce our debt to Brooklyn. This we are sure will be pleasing for many of our friends to know, as there is a general feeling that we should be able to not only pay our own way but to reimburse Brooklyn for first expenditure, if possible.

The pastoral work progresses. So far away, we are some months behind in anything started at Brooklyn; and even yet all the classes have not organized for this work. Melbourne and Adelaide are the only ones that have sent a

general report, though Brisbane is active in the work and Sydney has just commenced. The reports of Adelaide and Melbourne indicate that though the work needs great patience and plodding-perseverance on the part of the sisters, yet in the long run the results are good and well worth the efforts of weary feet and patience-tried hearts.

The Adelaide Friends called on about 1,100 names and had 16 chart talks, with average attendance of about 20. Four new classes have been started with an average weekly attendance of about 35. They had about 29 workers. Many of these workers could only give very little time. The Melbourne figures are very similar:—1,200 visited, 18 talks with average attendance of about 32. In both cases there are many who are now reading the volumes though not able to attend the classes.

The Photo-Drama of Creation has been fairly operative in S. A. and Victoria, having been shown at 16 places to about 116 audiences, with total attendance of about 37,640. We find that some good comes wherever it goes. We have been short-handed since Brother Lea left us; but Brother Michelmores has managed the whole thing in a most creditable manner. The Eureka Drama has also been operated very successfully in New Zealand by Brother and Sister Nelson in co-operation with the New Zealand classes, who jointly own the outfit. Then Brisbane, as well as West Australia, South Australia, and Tasmania, have all done good work in the way. I have not particulars from all, and time and space prevent going into too much detail.

Up to now we have not received our shipment of the Seventh Volume and all are anxiously awaiting its arrival.

Yours in the service of Christ, AUSTRALIAN BRANCH.

Annual Statement 1916-1917

| | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| Literature circulated:— | | |
| Studies in Scriptures, Bound Volumes..... | 11,185 | |
| Studies in Scripture, Paper Edition..... | 1,795 | |
| Booklets, and "Hell" Watch Towers..... | | 12,980 |
| | | 3,880 |
| | | 16,860 |
| Photo-Drama of Creation Books..... | 1,149 | |
| Photo-Drama of Creation Booklets..... | 445 | |
| | | 1,594 |
| | | 18,454 |
| Free Literature:— | | |
| "P. P." and "B. S. M."..... | | 723,500 |
| Watch Tower..... | | 6,190 |
| Free Scenarios..... | | 6,800 |
| Correspondence:— | | |
| Letters received..... | | 4,859 |
| Letters out..... | | 4,859 |

Tract Fund Expenditure

| | £ | s | d | | £ | s | d |
|-------------------------|-------|----|----|-------------------------|-------|----|----|
| Donations..... | 1,846 | 4 | 3 | Deficiency, 1916..... | 1,852 | 4 | 8 |
| Subscriptions "P."..... | | | | Purchase Printing | | | |
| "P."..... | 124 | 16 | .. | Paper..... | 472 | 17 | .. |
| Donations to Drama..... | 29 | 5 | .. | Pilgrim service, in- | | | |
| Subscriptions to Ser- | | | | cluding Advertising: | | | |
| mons in Newspa- | | | | Rent Hall, | | | |
| pers..... | 28 | 16 | 1 | Fares and Person- | | | |
| Deficiency..... | 1,228 | 10 | 8 | al expense..... | 91 | 15 | 5 |
| | 3,252 | 12 | .. | Postage, Freights, etc. | 67 | 3 | 8 |
| | | | | Postage on "P. P."..... | 24 | 9 | 6 |
| | | | | Printing "P. P."..... | 371 | 11 | 2 |
| | | | | Photo-Drama Work. | 177 | 12 | 5 |
| | | | | Expense re Sermons, | | | |
| | | | | publications..... | 119 | 18 | 7 |
| | | | | Proportion General | | | |
| | | | | Expense, Gas, | | | |
| | | | | Rent, &c..... | 75 | .. | .. |
| | | | | | 8,252 | 12 | .. |

WALKING TO THE LORD UPON THE WAVES

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—Matt. 14:31.

Jesus and his apostles had been across the Sea of Galilee. A multitude had gathered there; and Jesus was loth to send them to their homes; for it was toward evening and they had had no food for some time. Therefore he performed a great miracle and fed all the people. After this Jesus bade his disciples to get into a ship and cross again to the other side of the sea. But he himself remained to go into the mountain alone to pray. That night the sea became very boisterous and stormy. While the boat was rolling about upon the troubled sea, the apostles saw Jesus coming toward them, walking upon the billows. Some of them cried out in fear, thinking that they saw a phantom. But St. Peter recognized that it was the Lord. Suddenly the thought came to him that he might also walk upon the water and go to meet the Master. He called to Jesus, asking permission. Jesus answered, "Come"; and St. Peter stepped out boldly upon the great heaving billows.

This was a sudden spurt of faith, apparently, on the part of St. Peter—a wonderful faith it would seem. We wonder whether any of us would have thought of venturing out upon those waters! If Jesus had said to any of us that we might come to him walking upon the sea, would we have done so? When St. Peter had gone a little distance from the boat, he looked at the boisterous billows and his faith wavered. Immediately he began to sink. But he did the right thing to call, "Lord, save, or I perish!" It must have been quite a severe storm, as the context indicates. Poor Peter was helped by the Master, and then he and the Lord were received into the ship.

The disciples had been out for some time tossing about, and doubtless were some distance from the shore. But immediately they were at the land, as St. John tells us. (John 6:21) Perhaps the Master worked a miracle in the boat's coming so quickly to land—but no matter.

Why should the Lord speak of St. Peter as having little faith? He showed far more faith than most Christians would exercise. We are inclined to think of the Master's words as encouraging the Apostle—"You had a little faith; why did you not hold to it? Why did you doubt? If you had continued to exercise the faith with which you started out, it would have carried you safely over to me."

Our admiration for St. Peter is greatly augmented by the narration of this incident on the Sea of Galilee. He was ever impulsive, but his faith was genuine, and the Lord loved him therefor. The Apostle did not sit on the side of the boat and wonder if the Lord really meant it when he had invited him to come. On the contrary we find that he immediately believed the Master's voice and straightway he climbed over the ship's side and placed his feet upon the water. He did not question; he did not hesitate nor falter. The Master had beckoned to him, and it was for him to obey. And he did! Truly he possessed faith, real faith, great faith—though "little" in comparison to the faith of Jesus himself. Had St. Peter, after recognizing the Lord's presence, hesitated or refused to heed his invitation, preferring to remain with his companions in the sinking ship, the results might have been disastrous.

We think that we may learn a lesson from this incident. More than eighteen centuries ago the Lord left his church. Then she started out upon the stormy sea of her experiences and has toiled on throughout the night of this Gospel age. And now we have about reached the dawning of the Millennial morning; and we perceive the presence of Jesus. We see him walking on the billows of the world's stormy sea. It is no phantom. Our Lord is really with us, and has bidden us to come to him over the boisterous waves. It is a time for the exercise of faith; it is a time of special testing.

The storm is now greater than it has been for many years. But he calls his faithful to come out to meet him, and thus be separated from the majority of people—from the majority of those who have named his name, many of whom are merely nominal Christians. He has called us to come out of Babylon. We are to manifest our faith in him by prompt obedience. We would surely get into trouble if we should lose our faith! we might sink in the storm. The Lord appreciates even the little faith we have. He does not reprove us for not having greater faith, but would encourage it and cheer us on to an increase and strengthening of it. So we have stepped out upon the billows and have met our Lord; we are to be received into the ship. The vessel will soon be at the shore. The Master is here with us; and we shall soon reach the glorious kingdom—very soon!

FULFILLED BEFORE OUR EYES

By God's favor to the living members of the church, the time is past when the prophecies of Jehovah have had to wait for centuries or millenniums for fulfilment. No longer can there be delay, as spake the Lord through the Prophet concerning "that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel [the whole world], saying, The days are prolonged."—Ezekiel 12:22.

Now by his grace, it is not a time for waiting, but for

fruition, and for the divine utterance; "Thus saith Jehovah God: I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel [throughout the world]; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect [fulfilment], of every vision. For I am Jehovah; I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged; for in your days will I say the word,

and will perform it, saith Jehovah God. There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith Jehovah God."—Ezekiel 12:23, 25, 28.

It is something marvelous to us, and a mighty confirmation of faith to see the God-given interpretation of Revelation and Ezekiel in the Seventh Volume of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES* already in process of fulfilment before our very eyes.

Concerning the world war, just as the conflict began in July, 1914, with only two nations at war, and progressed in August and later with many nations involved, so did our heavenly Father evidently purpose that the titanic conflict should close—not miraculously, all nations at once, but in the natural way that Almighty God almost invariably does or permits things.

In Volume Seven, page 268, paragraph 3, is written, "The close of the war about October 1st, 1917."

To be fighting is war; to stop fighting is peace. The fighting actually ceased with the largest nation, Russia, in October, 1917; for since October 21st Russia has had peace along her entire western front. So far as international conflict is concerned Russia ceased her war and passed into peace, and now we see the state of peace legally progressing by official armistice or treaty. Simultaneously, and overlapping the ending of her war, Russia passes into the second divinely appointed stage of her trouble—revolution.

As to other nations, the end of war is not yet. For them there is and will be much heavy fighting; but just as some were late in getting into the war, some will be late in getting into peace. However, peace, the ending of war, began on time, according to the divine Word—in the very month indicated by our heavenly Father.

Still another divinely appointed prophecy in Volume Seven has seen its fulfilment already. On page 530, in connection with Ezekiel 33:21-22, it was written three-quarters of a year ago that Ezekiel's dumbness for a year, five months and

twenty-six days, might be a time feature, to be fulfilled in the dumbness of Pastor Russell in death. It was only reasonable to make this application, because the Prophet in so many respects pictured God's great messenger to the closing age of the church. Pastor Russell died October 31, 1916, and the period indicated will end about April 27, 1918. From the language of Ezekiel this is designated as the time of the coming of the dread tidings that "the city is smitten"; that is, that Christendom, or ecclesiasticism, is seen to be in desperate danger from revolution, if the existing forms of government shall not by then already have begun to change to such a revolutionary, socialistic, or laborite status as is so unhappily exemplified in stricken, suffering Russia.

In Ezekiel 33:22 it is written: "Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the morning, afore he that was escaped came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb." In other words Ezekiel's dumbness was removed in the evening before the morning when the tidings arrived. "It was," says the Seventh Volume, "on the same day, for the evening began the day." This signifies that perhaps half a year prior to the general realization of Christendom's downfall, Pastor Russell, though dead, shall again speak through this, the Seventh Volume of his *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*. Half a year before April 27, 1918, was about November 1st, 1917. It was about then, as divinely indicated, that the sale of the Seventh Volume began to attain the enormous proportions it has reached—over 100,000 copies having been distributed during that month alone! Thus Pastor Russell began to speak again to Christendom.

It is for our encouragement and to lift up our hearts to the utmost fullness of confidence in the Word of God, that our beloved Father in heaven is giving us a strong witness, in the interpretations of both Revelation and Ezekiel, of the divine guidance of the church in connection with the Seventh Volume of *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*.

JESUS AT WORK

[The first eight paragraphs of this article were reprinted from article entitled "Laborers in the Harvest," published in issue of February 1, 1912. The remainder was reprinted from article entitled "He Healeth Their Diseases," published in issue of February 15, 1912. Please see the articles named.]

JESUS BEGINS HIS WORK

[This article, excepting the paragraphs below, was a reprint of article entitled "Driven Into the Wilderness," published in issue of February 1, 1912, which please see.]

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

As we saw in our last Study, John the Baptist and his disciples had preached and baptized under the announcement that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and that all desirous of participating in its great blessings should come into full harmony with the Mosaic Law, and thus be prepared to be transferred from typical Israel to antitypical Israel—from membership in Moses the type, to membership in Christ the Antitype—the long-promised Seed of Blessing.

In due time the preaching of John the Baptist was brought to a close—when Herod cast him into prison. From that time onward Jesus and his disciples became more prominent. Their message, however, was the same as John's for we read that "Jesus came to Galilee preaching the Kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." (Verses 14, 15.) Whoever believed this Message recognized Jesus as the Sent

of God, the Messiah, who in God's due time will be the King of Israel and the Monarch of all the earth. "The time is fulfilled" meant that the foreordained time had arrived when the offer of the Kingdom would be made to the Jewish nation.

God foreknew, however, that Israel would not be ready, that only a few would be prepared to become Messiah's bride, his associate in the Kingdom work, and that it would require eighteen centuries to select the remainder from amongst the Gentiles. Hence in Romans 9, 10 and 11 St. Paul points out that the Prophets foretold the stumbling of Natural Israel, their temporary rejection as a nation, and the fact that a remnant of them would form the nucleus of the bride class, the remainder of which would be made up of Gentiles. He also shows that the remainder of the Jewish nation would be blinded "until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in" and the "elect" class is completed.

JOHN PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS

[This article was a reprint of that entitled "Preparation for the Kingdom," published in issue of January 15, 1906, which please see.]

ENTIRE SUBMISSION

"God's ways are not as our ways, his thoughts are not as ours; He wounds us sore with cruel thorns, where we have stooped for flowers.

But oh! 'tis from the oft-pierced heart those precious drops distill

That many a life, else all unblest, with healing balm shall fill. Then give, oh, give the flower to those who pray it so may be; But I would choose to have the thorns with thee, dear Lord, with thee!

"Man judgeth man in ignorance; he seeth but in part, Our trust is in our Maker, God, who searcheth every heart; And every wrong and every woe, when put beneath our feet, As stepping-stones may help us on to his high mercy-seat. Then teach us still to smile, O Lord, though sharp the stones may be, Remembering that they bring us near to thee, dear Lord, to thee!"