

LOVE OF THE FATHER AND THE SON OUR PATTERN

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

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

We are not to understand that God changed His mind meantime and concluded that, after all, He did love Adam and wished that He had not condemned him to death. Rather, we are to understand that the love of God which He exercised toward the world is of the sympathetic kind. You and I might have a kind of sympathetic love for a poor dog. If he had injured his paw, we would like to bind up that paw. We would have the sympathetic love. Not that we really *loved* that dog, but we had sympathy for it. So God's attitude toward the world is an attitude of sympathy. And He would have His people have a kind, generous feeling toward all men, and even toward the brute creation. In harmony with this the Apostle tells us that we are to do good to all men as

we have opportunity, but especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith. – Galatians 6:10.

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

The love which God has for the world is entirely different from that which the Savior mentions when He says, "The Father Himself loveth *you*." This seems to me one of the most wonderful texts of the Bible – that our great God could have a love for us – so small, so unworthy of His love or attention! This same sentiment [R5725 : page 211] of the Heavenly Father is reflected in the words of our text, "Jesus having loved His own,...He loved them unto the end." No doubt was there. We cannot think that those who were especially His own then, those who had come to Him and become His followers, were the most talented people in Jewry, any more than are His disciples today. Were they especially His own because they were so well educated? Was it because they were so refined? No. Was it because the world appreciated them and would take charge of them, or because they could be raised to responsible positions in the eyes of the world? No.

WHY JESUS LOVES HIS OWN

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

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

The quality that made Jesus love them was, I believe, first of all, their honesty. It seems to me there is no quality more estimable in the sight of God than honesty. Should not everybody be honest? I answer, Yes. *Is* everybody honest? Evidently not. The honesty which these disciples manifested was that they were ready to confess that they were nothing of themselves. They could not keep the Law of God. They could not think of themselves as anybody. They knew, as all Jews knew, or ought to have known, that God had given them the [R5725 : page 212] Law as the standard. They could not keep that Law. They were honest enough to confess it. Their hearts were therefore in the attitude to look for something that God had to give that would be better than the Law Covenant. – Romans 7; 8:1-4.

HYPOCRISY THE GREAT SIN

Notice the great ones, the holy, the religious ones, of the Jewish nation – the Scribes and Pharisees and Priests. They were claiming that they kept the Law; but they were not keeping the Law, as Jesus pointed out. That meant that they were deceived. They were professing to keep the Law. They made broad their phylacteries. They made long prayers to be seen of men. Jesus was continually reproving them. Doubtless there were many murderers, thieves and vagabonds in Palestine; yet we notice that Jesus passed

all their criminality by as insignificant as compared with hypocrisy. The most serious denunciations the Master gave were toward this class. The further you and I can get away from being religious hypocrites the better. If the whole religious community professing Christ could get away from hypocrisy, it would make a great stir in the world. There is a great deal made of certain names, indicating certain religious activities by means of these names, but the names do not match the facts in the case.

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

NONE SO PRECIOUS AS THE LORD'S OWN

Our Lord had received these disciples as being very closely related to Himself. They were the most precious ones in all the world. They were not His natural brothers and natural sisters; but because they had the Spirit of the Father, because they had His own

Spirit, they were greatly beloved. Having loved His own, He continued to love them to the end.

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

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

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

"KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD"

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

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

I believe that daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, as we think upon these things, as we consider, study out and understand the great

love of God as expressed in His marvelous Plan, we are getting a wonderful realization of how much "the Father Himself loveth" us. But we cannot understand it fully. But the very fact that any Father would do such wonderful things for any child would imply a great deal of love.

God had love for the angels when he made them. He had love for the cherubim and the seraphim when He made them. They always will be grand characters and therefore worthy of God's love. But here is the most wonderful expression of God's love that we by faith can believe in – that God should have such love **[R5726 : page 213]** toward us who are in every way disorganized as a race. The Father looked down and beheld in this race some jewels; and He lifted these jewels up and washed them free from sin through the merit of the Savior; and then, through their consecration, began the work of polishing these jewels and getting them ready for the mounting in effulgent glory in the Resurrection Morning, when He shall set these jewels in the gold of the Divine nature. Surely the Father Himself loveth us!

"WHAT SHALL I RENDER UNTO THE LORD?"

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

Now, then, what shall we render unto the *Lord* for all *His* benefits – His love, His kindness, for the great redemption

in which we share with the world, and further for the High Calling which we have received to come out of the world and become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Ours is a Heavenly inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away – an inheritance reserved for us who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time. All this is ours. God has fixed it so. There is no mistaking the matter. This is a New Creation. Until this Gospel Age there has been no sharing of His level, so to speak; but we cannot lose our way while we follow our Guide. And in proportion as you and I appreciate what God has done for us, we surely wish to do something for Him.

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

What shall we render? The things that you are to render and I am to render are the things we consecrated to God – the very same. That was your little all and my little all. But how shall we render our all? In everything, especially in our wills, we should seek to know the Father's will. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. In other words, my dear brethren, in coming into God's family and making this Covenant with the Lord, we have bound ourselves down. *He* did not bind us.

We bound *ourselves* down, that we would have no will of our own in any matter, that we would do only His will.

BOND SLAVES OF CHRIST, YET FREE MEN

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

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

Gradually we come to love the Lord's way. We grow in grace and in knowledge and in the love of God, so that eventually we come to hate the things we once loved and to love the things we

once despised. Thus as the Apostle describes it, We are transformed by the renewing of our minds. – Romans 12:2.

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

HOW WE MAY MINISTER TO THE LORD

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

it written. We are to lay down our lives for the ones whom Jesus *loved*.

I have found some very dear children of God who [R5726 : page 214] seemingly found it much easier to do something for the world than for the Church. That is not the proper sentiment. It is God First, the Lord Jesus next, the brethren next; and after that, all men as we have opportunity; and after that, the brute creation as we have opportunity. Brutes are to be neglected in favor of men, and the world are to be neglected in favor of the Church. If we have His Spirit we will love His own.

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

"HE THAT LOVETH GOD, LOVETH HIS BROTHER ALSO"

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

This is the reason they are commended to our love – because they have His spirit, regardless of whether they are from the highest or the lowest ranks of society. If the Father Himself has accepted them into His family, and the Father loves them, that is reason enough for **[R5727 : page 214]** you and me that we should love them. We ought to love the brethren. How much? It is a very long step the Apostle sets before us – we ought to be willing to lay down our *lives* for the brethren. Our commission is not to preach to the world, but merely to such as have "an ear to hear" and a desire to find God. In addressing the public we shall be sure in nearly every case to find some who are the Lord's children, and who need assistance in the good way, or some who are feeling after God and desire to become His children. Merely to have a harangue to interest the world is no part of our mission whatever. Our commission is the gathering out of the Church, the Bride of Christ.

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

WE MUST FELLOWSHIP WHOM GOD FELLOWSHIPS

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

down these streets will be a sufficient introduction to the business men of this vicinity." And the young man found it so.

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

HAST THOU LOVE? THEN SHOW IT NOW

I believe this is as good a thought as we can have as we close this Convention. The Master said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age." (Matthew 28:20.) We are now down at the end of the Age, "Only waiting till the dawning is a little brighter grown," only waiting till we pass beyond the veil, till we are joined to the Savior on the other side the veil. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." No opportunity after that of helping the brethren! All the brethren will have been helped. They will all have passed then where they will need **[R5727 : page 215]** no help. The time when we can encourage one another, and give a helpful look, or a warm clasp of the hand, and can show our fellowship in the sufferings of the present time, is *now*.

I hope we are all learning more and more this lesson of love; and I hope our hearts are opening more and more widely, as we come to see the glorious character of our Father and of our Savior, and come to receive of the Master's image, reflected in us more and more. The Apostle says that by looking on Jesus we are changed, we are transformed from glory to glory, in the present life. As we thus go on from one stage of heart development to another, from one step of glory to another, on this side of the veil, we are making the necessary progress, and we will be ready for the great final step, the final stage, when we shall see Him as He is and share His glory.

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

THE WORLD WAKING UP

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

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

PARTING WORDS

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

passed. And it will be a very helpful experience to all the world, as they shall be brought down to the place where they will look to the Lord as their Helper. Man's extremity will become God's opportunity.

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

A good many also have written in about the article that appeared in THE WATCH TOWER lately on Love. A brother wrote, "Since reading that article I have been trying to be more gentle, more kind, more considerate of others, and to practise these things; and I am finding a great blessing as I endeavor to put these principles into practise. I find it easier to be meek and kind and gentle in word and action." I believe the Lord today would have His people do as much polishing up of their characters as possible, so that it may not be necessary for **[R5728 : page 215]** Him to give us, through disciplinary providences in our lives, the polishing we need. If we would polish ourselves, we would not need to be polished by the Lord.

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

that are to share the nature of Christ and share with Him the Kingdom of the future, through which the world will be blessed.

We have in our Office stock some Vow cards – bookmarks. Many of you have them, no doubt. The Vow is on one side and a beautiful little poem on the other. Those who have taken this Vow form the most wonderful prayer circle the Church has ever known. Think of it, that approximately 15,000 have sent in their names to that effect! And we have reasons for believing that the number of those who have taken it is double this. However, at least 15,000 are praying daily for one another. You will find them in whatever part of the world you go – whether in China, or Japan, or Korea, or Colombia, or the Isthmus of Panama, or Scandinavia, or Finland, or Russia. Everywhere you will find those who have taken this Vow, and who read it daily, and who remember one another in their prayers. I think that is one of the most wonderful things in the world in all the Church's history. Never before were so many of God's children praying for each other. **[R5728 : page 216]**

A LETTER OF DEEP INTEREST

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

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

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

"The two brethren quickly clasped hands and stepped aside. Their joy was overflowing, that our Heavenly Father had permitted them to meet even on the field of the enemy! They could not understand one another's speech, but by signs they conversed, taking out their Bibles – and the Russian had the **SCRIPTURE STUDIES** in his pocket with a song book, all bound in one volume, and a photo of Brother Russell. The Brother then took the bayonet of the Russian brother, and gave him over as a prisoner of war; and he still remains as such in Hungary, while the Hungarian brother has now been sent to the hospital for the third time."

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

In Germany, Great Britain, and all over Europe, our people have been conscious for years that this war was coming on. They have been writing to me and continually inquiring how they should proceed if they were drafted or went into the army. In Volume Six of **SCRIPTURE STUDIES**, the friends are instructed to avoid taking life. If they were ever drafted into the army they should go. If they could be sent to the Quartermaster's Department to take care

of the food, that would be desirable, or into the hospital work. They should endeavor to get such positions. They could not be expected to do service in the way of killing. If they were obliged to go on the firing line, they could shoot over the enemy's head, if they wished.

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

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

OUR TIMES IN GOD'S HANDS

We do not know whether we who are here today shall meet again in the flesh or not. What matters it? We are fully content, either to live or to die – whatever His providence may direct in respect to us. "My times are in Thy hands; my God, I wish them there" – that expresses it beautifully, does it not? We wish to have the Lord's will done in respect to the time of our change, and in respect to all we enjoy together daily – it is all committed to Him. Our wills are entirely dead. His will is to rule in your body and in mine, and in all of us. I hope, dear brethren, that a great blessing has come to the Classes of Oakland, San Francisco, Alameda and surrounding Classes, from this Convention. I hope that as they go to their homes with their hearts overflowing with the comfort of

the Truth, they will carry blessings on to others; and that, like the widow's cruse of oil, the more they give away, the more they will have left for themselves.

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

