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1915 – ANNUAL REPORT – 1916

[Together with a Resume of the work of the various Branches of the service of the Society.]

WE feel sure that the dear friends everywhere are eagerly awaiting the Report for 1916. Our fiscal year ends October 31st. It may appear to some quite significant that it was on this very date that Brother Russell passed away, thus closing his earthly ministry with the end of the Society's business year. What more appropriate time could there be for us to turn aside for a little season and survey the Field!

In the heat and excitement of battle one cannot take much time to look about or to inquire what others may be doing or who may possibly be falling. Each soldier is on the alert to carry out the commands given by the great Captain of our Salvation; but the Lord loves all the true soldiers, and occasionally calls them aside for a little breathing spell and refreshment, thus preparing them for the next and more vigorous campaign. The Lord's people will greatly rejoice over the progress made during the year – Nov. 1, 1915, to Nov. 1, 1916.

Our Covenant with the Lord calls for a walk by faith. We are therefore not to expect to see the full results of our labors while on this side the veil, but our Lord is so loving and considerate that He frequently draws the curtain aside a little, that we may have a glimpse of the results following some of our labors of love. How such views rejoice our hearts!

The year 1916 has been a very eventful one in many ways. We need not mention here those events particularly connected with the falling of the "kingdoms of this world." They are written by the world's historians. Our interests are centered in the establishment

of "the Kingdom of God," for which the Church has so long been praying. At the beginning of the year we were in a more or less expectant attitude, not knowing what new experiences the Lord might have in store. We were certain that He would supply us with the waters of Truth and lead us to certain victories, if we but followed closely. There was much polishing and buckling on of the Armor of God, and preparing for whatever might be ahead. No one thought of faltering – the prize appeared brighter, and the goal nearer. Those inclined to criticize us had prophesied that, as 1914 had passed, and as their interpretation of our understanding of the Scriptures had failed to come to pass, the work would soon come to naught. How little do they realize the power of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the consecrated! And how far short of the reality is their knowledge of our glorious hopes and prospects! Considering the conditions – the comparatively small army of thoroughly consecrated and the great tension under which the whole world is straining – the results seem but little short of miraculous. But very few have become discouraged or have returned to their former pursuits.

THE COLPORTEUR WORK

Every well-equipped army is composed of several branches. The main branch is always the Infantry. It is the heavy fighting body, and the main reliance of every commander. So we might think of the Colporteurs. They are the soldiers who do the hard fighting at the front. Though each year since war-conditions prevail notices a change in the numbers, yet these noble soldiers of the Cross "close up ranks" and move on steadily and unfalteringly. We doubt not that the Lord will greatly reward this noble band. They have stormed many a redoubt of the enemy, and have been mighty in the Lord's hand to the pulling down of strongholds of evil and prejudice and planting the good Seed of the Kingdom.

Owing to the fact that financial conditions were greatly strained in many localities, and that labor difficulties and local

disturbances existed in others, the number of those who were able to devote most of their time to the work has been considerably less than in 1915. However, those who have remained have done better work on the average. For 1915, the average sale per Colporteur was a trifle over 406 STUDIES and 23 SCENARIOS. For 1916, the average sale per Colporteur was a little over 430 STUDIES, and 166 SCENARIOS. An average of 372 Colporteurs were in the field for the year.

The general advance in prices on all commodities hit this branch of the work very hard in some respects. During a number of months we were greatly hindered by not being able to secure sufficient cloth STUDIES to fill the Colporteurs' orders. Then the DE LUXE SCENARIOS ran short, and also the supply of Karatol volumes. The printers were unable to obtain delivery of the materials necessary to their manufacture. The paper shortage has greatly hindered the printers. Many of the Colporteurs made a specialty of the SCENARIO in territory which had already been canvassed a number of times for the STUDIES.

Total output of STUDIES for year.....	265,495
Total output of SCENARIOS.....	70,000
Total output of Booklets.....	110,000

Total	445,495

Moreover, these faithful workers were careful to encourage the reading of the STUDIES, where they found them already in the homes. A number were thus awakened to the import of present conditions, and some to active co-operation. [R6021 : page 388] Who can say what the yield may be when the Master of the Harvest shall show forth all the increase? May the Lord richly bless the dear Colporteurs!

THE PILGRIM SERVICE

We might liken the Pilgrim force in some respects to the Cavalry division of the army. It is much smaller than the Colporteur list, and covers more territory, and the force must be moved more quickly. Its work for the past year compares very favorably with any other year of the entire Harvest campaign. Note the following figures:

Number of Pilgrims.....	69
Miles traveled.....	552,498
Towns visited.....	6,575
Public meetings held.....	1,507
Semi-public meetings held.....	3,124
Parlor meetings held.....	9,221
Total attendance.....	809,393

FREE LITERATURE

We might term this the Grenadier Department of the army. It seeks out the hiding places of the enemy, and endeavors to leave little "bombs" in every available place. The output for 1916 has not quite equaled that of 1915. We cautioned the friends to be much more careful that each "bomb" be properly placed, so that no waste be made. The amount of free literature thus distributed is almost beyond our comprehension. The total output for the year was 22,158,000 BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLIES. To print these took over 598,000 pounds of paper, or 16 carloads. Who can estimate the number of strongholds of error which these "bombs" may have overthrown? But that is only an incidental feature of the work. The principal thing was the reflex action upon our own hearts. How we have rejoiced as we sought to carry the Message of Good Tidings to others and to free them from the shackles of error, even as we ourselves have been freed!

The friends will be glad to know that we have some very excellent Volunteer matter for 1917, prepared by Brother Russell. On page 396 of this WATCH TOWER will be found an item

especially upon this subject. We desire to make a word of explanation here: It is not so much a question of how many shots are fired as of how many are hits. Note the cost of this year's output in the financial report. The paper for next year will cost us more than twice as much as formerly. In other words, we were fortunately able to purchase paper last year at 3¾c per pound. Next year it will cost us over 8c. This means that a dollar will not go so far now as fifty cents have gone heretofore. Therefore, it behooves us to be very careful to make every shot count and not to waste any. Better fire only five shots and make three hits than to fire twenty shots for the same number of hits. Noise or number does not count. The shots only are effective. Therefore judge cautiously as to your needs, and be sure to use all that you order. We shall be pleased to have your orders as quickly as possible. The matter will be ready Jan. 1. "The World on Fire" is the leading article.

THE NEWSPAPER WORK

This had become greatly curtailed, owing to our dropping from the list many papers of small circulation, and further, to our policy of retrenchment necessitated by [R6022 : page 388] conditions produced by the war. Now that Brother Russell has passed beyond, the sermon feature will be discontinued entirely. The blessing of the Lord has rested upon this work far beyond our highest expectations. We remember when we thought if we could secure fifty newspapers to publish the sermons it would be a wonderful witness. About twenty years ago Brother Russell saw the great advantage of reaching the people by means of the public press. At that time the large sum of nearly half a million dollars seemed within his reach. He planned to use this for having the Truth spread broadcast through the magazines. Just as he expected to receive the money, the death of one man blocked the way. It was a great disappointment for awhile, but he knew that the Lord was still at the head of the Harvest work. Later, with an astonishingly small sum, the Lord opened another way, and at one time about 2,000 papers were

publishing the sermons simultaneously and altogether over 4,000 papers published weekly reports. We asked for showers, and the Lord gave us rainfalls almost amounting to floods. What an evidence of His might and power to open doors whenever it may please Him and best serve His cause!

Now that part of the work is past. Has He anything else to take its place? We think so. We believe that even a greater work is just at our doors, and that it will prove to be a richer blessing to the Church itself. The way is opening for thousands to enter into the work "while it is yet day," and they are hastening before the "night cometh when no man can work." The Colporteur work, the Pilgrim work, the Volunteer work, the PHOTO-DRAMA, and the "lightnings" of the Lord now observed on every hand have prepared the soil of the hearts of men. Each loyal soldier not already enlisted in some branch will be asking for the privilege to be a participant in the great battle of victory for the overthrow of Babylon. Already Babylon is gathering her hosts. We can hear the rumbling of the companies and the divisions as they are being assembled; and we think that it will not be long before she will have her army in full battle array. Hence we, like David of old, wish to have our slings loaded with pebbles from the Brook of Truth and to hurl them while Babylon is preparing for the battle. Let each remember that before one can enlist under the lead of our glorious and victorious Captain, it is well to take the oath of full allegiance to Him – to make a whole-hearted consecration and take up the cross and follow Him, else we cannot expect to share the glories of the Kingdom, soon to be established. We refer to

THE PASTORAL WORK

This seems to us to be another great forward movement against the embattlements of the Adversary. The campaign is opening up so rapidly that it is difficult to keep up with the rush. We can almost hear the noise of the gathering of the companies all over the country. Letters are pouring in from all sides asking for

information, and many are already in the thick of the battle. We have been hindered by not being able to secure the needed "ammunition" to equip all the companies. The "munition factories" – our printers – have been greatly delayed in filling our orders; but we have promise now of speedy delivery, and soon we hope to see the battle being waged along the entire front.

We wish we could tell you many of the interesting and encouraging incidents taking place in this service. We give one: In one of the larger cities the sisters had loaned a book to a gentleman. He read it, became very much interested, and said that he would be glad to pay for as many books as the Class could loan. When informed that they could use 700, he promptly gave his check for the needed amount. A letter now going out to the Pastoral workers gives other interesting and helpful information to these dear colaborers.

THE DRAMA

The PHOTO-DRAMA and the EUREKA DRAMA are still a valuable means of reaching many. The country districts are glad to have the opportunity of seeing the beautiful **[R6022 : page 389]** slide-pictures, even though they may not see the "movies." As a result we are receiving many inquiries from rural districts, which show a considerable interest. We are able to furnish the PHOTO-DRAMA to Classes in the following foreign languages: Armenian, Dano-Norwegian, French, German, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Polish and Swedish.

There are twenty-one DRAMAS in active service, exhibiting mostly on Sundays; very few working during the week. These twenty-one are being operated mostly by the Classes of the larger cities, even where the DRAMA has been previously exhibited with success. We are receiving some glowing reports. One of these, from Toronto, Canada, informs us that in a hall seating 1,000, frequently hundreds are turned away at a single exhibition. Those attending

are showing marked interest and are leaving many cards of inquiry. The PHOTO-DRAMA has also been shown upon several of the large American battleships, and many have manifested marked interest. It was also shown to the soldiers down upon the Mexican border, and good reports are coming from there. We have two more DRAMAS ready for use. If any of the large Classes are so situated that they could handle the PHOTO-DRAMA for a season, the Society will be pleased to hear from them; and if they do not have local operators arrangements could probably be made to supply them on short notice. Our latest information is that the DRAMA has witnessed to about twelve millions. Many classes have in this way been doubled, and prejudice against the Truth has been dispelled as perhaps could not otherwise have been accomplished.

THE WATCH TOWER

We are not printing so many extra copies for samples and for supplying back numbers as formerly, but we are printing about 47,000 each issue, except in the case of the Memorial Number, for which we are expecting a wide circulation. Orders for large numbers of these continue to come from Classes and friends. We do not know of a better issue to allay prejudice against Present Truth. It is very cheap at 5c. for 32 pages. THE WATCH TOWER is also published in the German, Polish, Swedish, Dano-Norwegian and French languages, but the Memorial Number in only English, German and Polish.

We have long considered THE WATCH TOWER list the best criterion in regard to the general interests of the Harvest work, but there is still good reason to believe that the list does not include more than half the names it should. We are dependent upon the brethren to make known to others the merits of this publication and to urge all to send in their subscriptions. We remind them again of our willingness to cancel the debt of any receiving THE WATCH TOWER on credit who will advise us of their inability to pay.

It must be gratifying to all to observe in THE WATCH TOWER columns the letters of sympathy and expressions of continued loyalty to the Society and to the Harvest work. These letters cover every section of the country, and incoming mails from foreign lands show the same spirit of sympathy and confidence – that He who began the good work is both able and willing to complete it.

SUMMARY OF THE WORK

The foreign branch of the service has been to some extent hindered, especially in Germany and France. The work in England has gone on without much change, and we have good reports from the dear brethren there. We hope to publish some very interesting letters soon.

As this is the report for the last year our dear Brother Russell was connected with the work, we feel sure that all have an added interest in it.

Our mail for the past year has been very encouraging:

Letters received..... 134,849
Letters and cards sent out..... 152,944

You will observe that last year's report closed with a loan to balance the account. Therefore the report for the year just closed commenced with no balance on hand:

RECEIPTS Good Hopes and Tract Fund
donations\$149,726.21

EXPENDITURES

Pilgrim service	30,967.71
Free literature, Lecture Bureau, etc	60,596.74

For the Blind	845.00
For the various Conventions	1,985.36
Pastoral work	269.60
For the Foreign Fields	32,850.23
Paid on loan	20,000.00
Leaving a balance on hand to commence the year	2,211.57

As we see the vast possibilities opening up before us for the incoming year, we trust that each will carefully consider what share he or she may have in the work. As has been customary for a number of years, in order that the Society might outline its work with as much definiteness as possible – lay plans and make contracts – we give the friends an opportunity of advising us as soon as possible how much they estimate they will be able to give to the work for the coming year. Please remember that this is in no sense a solicitation. We know that all are glad to give to the best of their ability; that many have local expenses for Class and other needs; and yet that all desire to assist the general work as much as possible – as the Lord hath prospered them.

We are glad to show a safe balance on hand and to report that the receipts during the past month are encouraging. **[R6023 : page 389]** We are governing ourselves accordingly – making preparations for the wisest and most judicious use of our stewardship. We doubt not the Lord's continued interest in the Cause which we all love so much, and His intention to carry to completion that which we believe He began. Continue to pray for us, as we always do for you.

Finally, as expressed in the motto text of Brother Russell's selection for 1917: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." – Numbers 6:24-26.

REPORT FROM 1886-1891

We feel sure that all will be greatly interested in a quotation from the first published report – extending from 1886 to 1891 – published in THE WATCH TOWER in the latter year. We append the part as follows:

"PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM"

"The handful of Harvest laborers and the money at our disposal seem insignificant in contrast with the hundreds of missionaries and the millions of dollars spent by Catholic and Protestant societies in their support and in publishing abroad the doctrinal errors handed down from the Dark Ages, which tend to pervert and subvert the teachings of the Scriptures. But such is the zeal which the 'present truth' inspires, that 'a little one is able to chase a thousand, and two to put ten thousand to flight.' (Deut. 32:30.) Although few and untitled, and generally without great worldly learning – in these respects resembling those sent out by our Lord with the Kingdom Message at the First Advent – the faithful band of Harvest workers is busily engaged (some giving all their time and others able to give only a portion of it) in seeking out the 'wheat' class – the sickle of Truth which they bear separating 'the wheat' from the 'tares.'

"Few know these Colporteurs as the Lord's real representatives, or recognize that dignity which the Lord sees in **[R6023 : page 390]** their humility and self-sacrifice. Missionaries? No, say the world and the nominal Church, *ours* are the missionaries, who go to foreign lands. Yes, says the Lord, these are My missionaries, charged with a grand mission – to 'gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice.' They shall be Mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I come to make up My jewels.'

"Ministers? No, say the world and the nominal Church, only ours who wear clerical garments and preach from our pulpits are

God's ministers. Yes, says the Lord, My servants (ministers) they are because they serve Me, dispensing Present Truth to My household. I have sent forth the Message which they bear. He that despiseth them despiseth Me, and he that receiveth the sealing in the forehead which I send by them will know the doctrine, that it is of Me. 'My sheep know My voice.'

"During the past six years, annual reports of the work have not been made, for the reason that the reports would not have shown so well as we would have liked, and might have been discouraging rather than encouraging, some years. But the past year has been so favorable, and the responses already received to the suggestion in a recent TOWER have been so encouraging, that we have concluded to report each year hereafter, good or bad. We accordingly report now the TOWER MISSIONARY WORK in spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom for the *six years past*:

"WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY

"SECRETARY'S REPORT

"FROM JANUARY 1, 1886, TO DECEMBER 1, 1891

"EXPENDITURES:

"Paid balance, debt, owing January 1, 1886. \$516.17

"Expended in publishing and circulating
Tracts and sample copies of WATCH
TOWER and in sending TOWER to the
Lord's poor 8,625.03

----- \$9,141.20

"From *Old Theology Tract subscriptions*..... \$1,113.63

"From Tract Fund Donations..... 8,027.57

----- \$9,141.20

"It will thus be seen that we started Dec. 1st, 1891, with an evenly balanced ledger. But since figures are not apt to come out so

exactly, it may be proper to remark that we had expended considerably more than our receipts, which would have shown a debt owing; but five friends of the Cause subscribed the balance so as to permit us to start the new fiscal year, beginning Dec. 1st, free from debt.

"Tracts published and distributed..... 841,095"

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