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"THE LORD PRESERVETH THE FAITHFUL."

"O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." – Psa. 31:23,24.

SINCE the publication of "Our Children in the Time of Trouble," in our issue of April 15, numerous requests have been received for a further expression concerning the probabilities of personal safety during the troublous times just ahead.

One Brother writes: – "As the Lord almost invariably works through means, and as the 'prudent man foreseeeth the evil and hideth himself' (Prov. 22:3), I think it proper to seek of the Lord a way of escape. This question will force itself more and more upon God's people as the storm clouds gather and the thunders of his wrath become more appalling; and I believe it is of the Lord that his people should effectually hide themselves 'until the indignation be overpast.' He has given them the exceeding precious knowledge of the truth that they may seek of him a place of safety. I have long believed with the brother to whose letter you replied in the above number that some remote place will be the safest. But we must not seek and inquire in fear and doubt of our loving Father's care, but *in faith*, because the fact that he has given us a knowledge of [R2019 : page 190] the coming trouble is proof that he intends we shall find a refuge.

"This question is pertinent, not only to the children of the elect, but also to what you term the 'Elisha class.' My observations for a number of years have convinced me that the 'Elijah class' are not only few, but extremely few; and yet there are many Christians, devout, and unbendingly loyal to all the light they have, who do not know of the harvest time; and there are others who do know of it and are in full sympathy with the truth, who have confessed to me that they have no desire or hope beyond a home in the redeemed earth when Christ is

King. Yet I perceive in them considerable of the spirit of Christ – meekness and loyalty. My observations convince me that these outnumber the 'little flock' ten to one; and I am so glad that our Father will take care of them; but, as I said before, I believe he will use means."

Another Brother says: – "Soon after I made my escape from Babylon you wrote me, in answer to a question respecting the time of trouble, that you understood the Scriptures to teach that the 'saints' would escape many of those things coming upon the world in the time of trouble. Now, will you kindly give me your opinion as to how a man in business will escape the financial crash? Is it by such a one foreseeing the trouble and withdrawing from business? or do you think that the saints who have families may continue in trade and have the Lord's special care which will bring us successfully through, up to the time of our change? I have had thoughts and conversations along this line, but have not become thoroughly convinced either way, and shall appreciate an answer either in the TOWER or by letter."

A Sister wishes to know how Psa. 37:25,26 can be harmonized with the fact that some of the Lord's consecrated people have been in very poor circumstances, and whether this statement of the Psalmist is to be understood as a guarantee that throughout the trouble the Lord's people will not be reduced to beggary?

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The foregoing queries have been answered in part in the following WATCH TOWER articles: –

"Your Safety in the Trouble." – Oct. 1, '95, p.229.

"Come, My People." – Mar. 15, '95, p.72.

"The Time of Thy Visitation." – Aug. 1, '95, p.178.

"Upon this Generation." – Sept. 1, '94, p.285.

Looking out upon the world of mankind we see them divided by the Word of God into two classes. (1) Those who *believe* in the Lord

Jesus Christ; who have accepted him as their personal Redeemer from sin [R2020 : page 190] and its penalty, and who accordingly are seeking to avoid sin and to be acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (2) The vast majority of mankind who (whatever the length and breadth of the divine provision for all in Christ) are yet in their sins, who have not accepted a share in the ransom nor fled away from the sins which beset them as members of the fallen race, who for these reasons are still unreconciled to God, strangers and foreigners to his love and promises, and enemies through wicked works.

Of these two classes only the first could reasonably hope for any favor at God's hands. And this class, although not large, may be subdivided into three classes, as below.

(a) Those whose appreciation of the great divine gift has developed a reciprocating love to God and Christ, which has led them gratefully to consecrate to the divine service their little all; – time, money, influence, reputation, talents, –

"To be used in joyful service
For the glory of their King."

Such rightly feel that to serve so good a King is an inestimable privilege; and hence, to them his word is law, and it becomes their very meat and drink to do his will. Thus, daily, these become more and more conformed to the image of God's dear Son (Rom. 8:29), and thus they are making their calling and election sure as his joint-heirs – to be like him and be with him and to behold and share his glory. These alone "walk worthy of the vocation" whereunto all living believers have been called; – "worthy of the Lord." (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10.) To these all of the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word belong – help and strength for the present life, and glory, honor and immortality for the future, with Christ, the Lord.

(b) Some, who started out with an appreciation of God's gift and their consequent reasonable service of full consecration to God's

service, have been sidetracked and hindered, by "the cares of this life or the deceitfulness of riches" (sought, even if not secured). These do not love sin, nor delight in its practice; they love righteousness in word, thought and deed, and wish that circumstances were favorable to righteousness, and long for the time when Satan and sin shall be bound for the thousand years of Christ's reign, and pray fervently, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Yet they are so in bondage to the customs of society, so fond of the approval of fellow creatures, and the spirit of Christ in them is so blended with the spirit of worldliness, that they are hindered from performing the *sacrifice* of earthly things and interests which they covenanted to do when flushed with their warm first love and appreciation of God's goodness and grace in Christ. They have lost much of their first love; and, consequently, self-sacrifices for the King and his cause are more painful and more difficult. At first they accounted it joy to be permitted to suffer for the truth and for right-doing with and like their Lord: now it is a painful duty which they shirk repeatedly, and repeatedly mourn over. They resolve that they will again take up the cross and find the old joy in bearing it; yet they do not do so. [R2020 : page 191]

Their fault and hindrance began in dividing their hearts between heavenly and earthly interests. They listened to the voice of the world, the flesh and the devil (and the Nominal Church), saying, Be not an extremist in piety; take a moderate course, else you will be considered a religious fanatic, as Jesus, Peter, Paul and other ancient worthies were disesteemed. They thereupon dropped their *full* consecration, even unto death, and decided on a "moderate course" by which they could retain the esteem of their unconsecrated friends and associates, and, as they vainly supposed, exert over them a more powerful influence for good. They had no thought of abandoning their covenant of suffering and death with Christ, but intended merely to do their suffering and dying in a more moderate way than a full surrender – an out and out sacrifice, once and for ever, of earthly hopes, aims, friendships, etc. Alas! they did not realize that they could not sacrifice themselves, – that only the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, can perform the great

sacrifice by which we become *dead* to the world and alive toward God. He must lay his hands (power) upon those who would be joint-sacrifices; he must offer them.* And he offers none except the fully consecrated; nor would the Father accept upon his altar any others than these. In determining to sacrifice themselves piecemeal when and how they and their friends might please, was the primary mistake of (*b*). And the mistake continues; therefore their repeated determinations to "suffer joyfully" are always failures.

*See [TABERNACLE SHADOWS OF BETTER SACRIFICES, Page 55](#).

The only way out of their difficulty is to do their first works (Rev. 2:5) – to commence over again by a full surrender of themselves to the Lord, that he may sacrifice them and give them grace to endure it joyfully and thus through full obedience restore them to class (*a*) as "overcomers" who shall "inherit all things."

(*c*) This class is a large one, very inferior in its attainments. It includes, nevertheless, many who are highly esteemed amongst men as Christians. It is composed of those who have accepted Christ as their Redeemer, by accepting in faith their share of his great sin-offering. They desire all the blessings he has promised, but would like to give nothing or as little as possible in return. They hear God's voice through the apostle, urging them to present their bodies living sacrifices, and thus to suffer with Christ and by and by to share his glory, and they realize that it is but a reasonable service; but they do not heed the call, and will not be granted a portion of the great "feast," the "marriage supper," prepared for those who love their Redeemer with an intensity which delights to render life itself in his service. Consequently, so far as the present high calling is concerned, they have "received the grace of God in vain," in that they have not made even an attempt to learn of their calling, much less to make their election sure, by full consecration and a baptism into the sufferings and death of Christ. – Mark 10:38.

Now amongst these three classes the favors of God must be understood to apply. The first (*a*) class undoubtedly is the one to whom

as "overcomers" the promise applies, – "Watch ye that *ye may be accounted worthy to escape* all those things coming upon the world, and to stand before the Son of Man." They will escape (we believe) by being all gathered through death to glory before the terrible severity of the world's trouble will be permitted to come.

The great time of world-wide trouble (40 years) which began in October, 1874, is of two kinds. (1) Trouble, siftings, or fiery trials, upon the Church, that "every man's work [in the Church] may be tried so as by fire," and that the wood, hay and stubble of character or faith may be destroyed. (2) Trouble upon the world, financial, political and social, which will utterly wreck all present institutions and prepare for the rule of righteousness by the Kingdom of God. The first trouble will be specially upon the *saints* and all others who are in any degree subjects of divine favor. None who are truly God's sons will escape it. As it draws to a close, having selected, purified and proved the "overcomers," it will be followed by extreme trouble of a physical kind upon the world, in which those who were true children of God but whose lack of zeal did not permit them to be "accounted worthy" as "overcomers" (class *b* above), will suffer death, – not as *sacrifices* (for the acceptable day of sin-offerings, the "Day of Atonement," will be at an end), but, as the "scape goat," a destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved. These, "the great company," who must come up out of great tribulation and wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb – these, surely, we cannot expect to see shielded from the very trouble which the Lord declares they need; and which in special mercy he will inflict for their perfecting. – Rev. 7:9,13-15.

The third class described (*c*) remains for consideration. Can we expect that these who already have received the grace of God in vain, to the extent that they have refused to consecrate themselves fully to God – their "reasonable service," – shall we expect that additional favors will be bestowed upon these, more than upon others who did not the Master's will, because they knew it not? – because the god of this world had blinded their minds? We incline to fear not! If they have not

had a full opportunity, we doubt not they will yet receive it with the residue of mankind during the Millennium; but that God should specially protect these from the tribulations of the day of trouble does not seem to us to be reasonable or Scriptural. It [R2020 : page 192] is those who knew the Lord's will and did it not who are to be "beaten with *many* stripes." – Luke 12:47.

So far as we can at present see, the only ones promised "escape" from the coming storm are the overcoming class (*a*). Isaiah 26:20 should be understood as applicable to God's people throughout the past as well as in the present and so long as his "saints" shall be in the flesh and need divine protection. It does not refer to the severity of the coming catastrophe because the saints will all be gone before that time.

We may, however, reasonably expect that divine protection will shelter two classes not recognized above. (1) The children of the Lord's consecrated people who will not have previously reached years of discretion and personal responsibility. (See 1 Cor. 7:14.) (2) Some whose eyes will get opened during the trouble, and who will promptly avail themselves of the grace of God and fully consecrate themselves to his service. These two classes will, we believe, be subjects of divine care in the day of trouble. And although they will not "escape" from it, as will the saints, they will, we believe, be preserved, guarded, provided for in the midst of it.

We do not believe that *efforts* to escape the trouble by going into solitary places, etc., will be successful. [R2021 : page 192] It is the time for the building of the true antitypical Temple, the glorified Church; and, preceding it, "Before those days, there was no reward [hire] for man, nor any reward [hire] for beast; and for him that went out and for him that came in there was no peace, because of oppression: and I let loose all men, every one against his neighbor." (Zech. 8:10, Leeser's translation.) The trouble will be world-wide; there will be no place of

safety except under divine providence; and, as we have seen, few can expect that protection.

"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth which have wrought his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness: perhaps ye will be protected in the day of Jehovah's anger." (Zeph. 2:3.) This is the only safe course. Those who now seek according to this direction may yet make their calling and election sure, and be among the "overcomers" who shall "escape" the things coming upon the world. Those who do not "escape," but find themselves in the great trouble, can follow no better advice; – they may be hid or protected from at least some measure of the trouble.

Hence, instead of seeking a *place* of safety (which cannot be found) for ourselves and our children, let us seek to bring ourselves and them into the above described *condition* of safety, by hearty obedience to the reasonable service set before us.

The suggestions of Brother Clardy's letter, published on other page, we consider good.

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There is this to be said, however; although the great financial and social trouble has not yet come and will not come for some years, yet the great coming event casts its shadows before; and we have something to do with these present-time shadows, spasms and perplexities. While the hearts of the worldly-wise are failing them for *fear* (not from suffering) and for looking after those things *coming* (not things already experienced), God's people are to be in no such fear and perplexity. We know in whom we have believed and are persuaded that he is both able and willing to keep that which we have committed to his keeping. These thunderings and dark shadows only corroborate the divine Word which foreshows them all and the glorious results to follow. We will draw the nearer to the Lord and by faith shut about us the more closely the protecting door of our Lord's exceeding great and precious promises.

But we are not to expect miraculous help except when necessary. We are to watch as well as pray, and to seek to order our course in life according to the leadings of divine providence for which we are to be constantly on the lookout. We are to look ahead (Prov. 22:3) and to use our best judgment accordingly, trusting in and looking for our Lord's providential guidance. This may mean a change of business or not, or even a failure in business. If you have done your best to "owe no man anything but love," and have used your best abilities diligently, and then fail, accept the result with resignation. With the consecrated the chief thought should not be ease, nor large profits, nor best wages, but *best conditions*: best conditions for personal development in Christian graces, and best conditions for rendering service to the Lord, his people and his truth. If you are married, the interests of your companion along these lines should have equal consideration; and if you have children, they and their interests, present and future, are a part of your charge. You will need divine help in weighing these interests, that you may give to each its proper share of consideration. If you have children, you brought them into the world, and are responsible to them and to God accordingly: you owe them not only religious instruction but secular education and a business or trade preparation, to fit them for and start them in life. If unprepared or unwilling to give them this reasonable start, you should not have begotten them. Having begotten them, they are a first-mortgage upon your time, influence and means; and in providing for them you will be blessed. Not even the gospel has a prior claim upon your time.

But the interests of your children are a part of the Lord's providential care over you, if you are one of his fully consecrated ones. If, therefore, you see opportunities for teaching your children trades less liable to strikes, boycotts and wrangling than your own – more conducive to peace and the cultivation of the graces of [R2021 : page 193] the spirit, be willing to sacrifice something for their benefit, if the Lord providentially shows you a good opportunity to do so.

Respecting present business trials: "Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed."* "I have never seen the righteous *forsaken* [by the Lord] nor his seed begging bread." These promises are sure, and while doing good and trusting we may also rejoice. This does not imply that you will have no business trials and vexations and disappointments and discouragements. Such experiences may be just what you need to develop your Christian character – in meekness, patience, brotherly-kindness – Love. Your meal and oil may run low, as did those of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:12-16); but God knoweth it and will provide, with spiritual blessings accompanying, if you will but trust him and do what you can do. The Lord may provide the things needful through our own industry, or through the generosity of friends, or by public provision. While the former is to be desired and sought, the latter are not to be despised or rejected. None of these methods are begging. Accepting proffered help is not begging. **[R2021 : page 193]**

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

When the morning paints the skies,
And the birds their songs renew,
Let me from my slumbers rise,
Saying, "What would Jesus do?"

Countless mercies from above
Day by day my pathway strew;
Is it much to bless thy love?
Father, "What would Jesus do?"

When I ply my daily task,
And the round of toil pursue,
Let me often brightly ask,
"What, my soul, would Jesus do?"

Would the foe my heart beguile,
Whispering thoughts and words untrue?
Let me to his subtlest wile

Answer, "What would Jesus do?"

When the clouds of sorrow hide
Mirth and music from my view,
Let me, clinging to thy side,
Ponder, "What would Jesus do?"

Only let thy love, O God,
Fill my spirit through and through;
Treading where my Savior trod,
Breathing, "What would Jesus do?"

– *Selected.*
