

## **GATHERING OR SCATTERING, WHICH?**

**"He that is not for me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." – Matt. 12:30 –**

OF THE JEWS in general at the first advent our Lord declared, "They knew not the time of their visitation." (Luke 19:44.) When we remember that the people addressed were the prototype of nominal Christendom today, it should not surprise us that the same words are applicable now. As Israel recognized not Jesus as the Messiah and that his work was a harvest work, a separating work, so likewise Christian people in general today are unaware that we are living in the second presence of the Messiah and that a similar harvesting work is now in progress – separating wheat from tares and gathering the wheat into the garner. Although there has always been a right and a wrong side to every question – the side of right and truth and the side of wrong and error, the side of God and the side of Mammon – yet the harvest in the end of the Jewish age brought a new issue and a fresh division along new lines.

So it is in this harvest time: throughout the Gospel age there has been the side of right and justice and its opposing side of wrong and error, the side of God and the truth and the side of Mammon and confusion. But now in the harvest time the fresh separation takes place along new lines – a separation amongst those who are on the side of God, on the side of right, on the side of truth. Evidently these harvest testings, siftings, separations, represent more crucial tests to the Lord's people than have come to them at other times, and correspond with the harvest time at the first advent, and now have come increased blessings, privileges, favors, enlightenments. Where much advantage is given the more will reasonably be expected in return – where the

trials are more severe, the more assistance and enlightenment are necessary and have been provided.

## **THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION**

Surveying Christendom we find many in the nominal churches doing all in their power to oppose the harvest work; nevertheless it goes on prosperously, in harmony with our Lord's declaration, "So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:11.) It was just so at the first advent: practically all of the leading theologians, Doctors of the Law, as well as the priests and the leading prominent Pharisees, took the side of opposition to the great Reaper and that harvest work. Similarly today in this harvest the most vigorous opponents of the Lord's work are the Doctors of Divinity and those prominent in religious matters. They can agree amongst themselves, and bury all their own serious oppositions of doctrine and usage in union meetings, etc., Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics and Jews, as we sometimes see mentioned in the public press. But they all with one accord are violently opposed to Present Truth as represented in the WATCH TOWER publications, opposed to the harvest work.

Just so the Sadducees, the Pharisees and Herodians made common cause in opposition to the Master and the harvest work in the end of the Jewish age. Nevertheless the Lord's work was really helped forward by their opposition, for he intended the gathering only of the elect class, the fully consecrated, and the opposition helped to separate from these all others; and just so we find it at the present time. We are not, therefore, complaining respecting these oppositions, knowing full well that the Chief Reaper has the entire situation in charge, and that by divine ability he is able to make all things work together for good to the right

class, and for the accomplishment of his purpose in the separations intended at the present time.

We feel justified according to the Scriptures in supposing that Satan, the great Adversary of the divine plan, has more or less to do with the oppositions of **[R3883 : page 343]** this present time, as the Scriptures assure us he had to do with the opposition to the harvest work of the Jewish age. He of course works through natural channels, uses human instrumentalities. As an angel of light he urges those who have been identified with religious institutions of human organization that their systems having been used by the Lord to some extent in helping faithful souls nearer the truth, it would be an error now to think of these institutions or systems as being rejected of the Lord and his people called out of them. He blinds them to the fact that in the past God has repeatedly used the wrath of men to praise him, and various institutions not approved by him have served as his instrumentalities in accomplishing his needed work, just as the Lord had undoubtedly blessed and used the priests and Levites, the Doctors of the Law and the Pharisees, in olden times, and continued to use them more or less up to the time of their final testing, when the Master declared publicly, "Your house is left unto you desolate." – Matt. 23:38.

All true Israelites should have recognized the change of dispensations; or, as the Scriptures declare, they should have known "the time of their visitation." The difficulty evidently was that many of them were overcharged with the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, the honors of men and their sectarian prosperity. And so it is here in this harvest time: the test comes along similar lines. Fidelity to the voice of him that speaketh from heaven through the Bible means, in the clearer light now granted us, an opposition to the errors and false doctrines long cherished as truths by ourselves and forbears and friends. Now as then this increase of light, this hearing of the voice of the Lord, brings a

test – the separation of those who are the true sheep from others who do not belong to this flock. "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me." [R3884 : page 343]

The true sheep have long recognized that the voice of their creeds from the "dark ages" was not purely and simply the voice of the Shepherd: they heard instead confused voices, some of them from the Lord and some of them from the Adversary; and this confusion is represented in the creeds. The word Babylon signifies confusion; hence nominal Christendom as a whole is today, according to the Scriptures, to be recognized as Babylon, confusion. Her voice is not wholly bad nor wholly good – it is the message of the Lord contradicted and confused by the message of the Adversary.

But now in the harvest time the Chief Reaper is here, and all the wheat class should know it and should heed his message and be gathered into the garner. Under another figure the Chief Shepherd has come, and all the true sheep should now discern clearly between his voice and the voice of strangers, heard through their creeds and generally from their pulpits – voices which speak Evolution, Higher Critical Infidelity, and the rejection of the Word of God, which the Apostle declares is alone able to make us wise unto salvation – that is alone able to qualify the man of God that he may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. – 2 Tim. 3:17.

## **HARVEST HELPERS AND HINDERERS**

One of the chief delusions practised by the Adversary at this time is to persuade the Lord's true people that any downfall of Babylon in any of its departments or denominations would be sacrilegious, would be an injury to the cause of Christ, whereas they should see clearly that the prosperity of the cause of Christ at the present time means the deliverance of his true saints from Babylon, and that this shall signify eventually the complete fall

of Babylon as expressed in the Scriptures, the rejection of Babylon, which chronologically we located in the Scriptures by the words, "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen....Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues." (Rev. 18:2,4.) This fallen condition of Babylon signifies, not her destruction, but her complete rejection from God's favor, so that God will use her no more as a channel for the bestowment of his best blessings – "The voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride shall be heard no more at all in thee." – Rev. 18:23.

We are now in the little season in which the Lord is waiting for the response of those whom he is calling out of Babylon. Those in her who have the highest stations of honor find it most difficult to forsake these and to become followers in the footsteps of Jesus to the extent of being disowned by the religious teachers and made of "no reputation." The Lord's call out of Babylon is not an audible one – he merely calls us by the principles of righteousness. He lifts the curtain before the eyes of understanding of his consecrated ones and thus lets them see some of the errors, some of the falsities in which they and others of Babylon are involved – dishonoring the holy name – blaspheming the holy name by misrepresentation of the divine character and plan. This is and should be call enough for those who are of the Lord's Spirit, for those who love the Lord and the honor of his name more than they love houses or lands or parents or children or any other creature or thing – yea, more than they love their own lives. Such are sure to respond and to come out of Babylon; others who remain, in spite of seeing the light, fail to be overcomers of the highest class – fail therefore to be in the elect Bride class, and must be counted in with the great company, which will come through great tribulation, and will get out of Babylon only when she has been cast as a great millstone into the midst of the sea – in the time of anarchous trouble with which this age will close.

## **"WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?"**

What we all need to see clearly is that if we are on the side of the Lord we are helpers in this harvest work – helpers in the separation which is now due to be accomplished – an assisting of the Lord's true people out of Babylon and its confusion and darkness into the light of truth and more fully into the grace of God. We will all then see that to be in Babylon, upholding her systems, upholding her errors, whether by the influence of our names upon her rolls, counted in with her numbers, or by rendering any financial aid in any [R3884 : page 344] measure or degree, we are to that extent opposing the work which he is now doing in the world. If all could get this correct Scriptural thought in mind it would help them amazingly to know the step of duty and to take it. All who are the Lord's at heart must be loyal to him; and if they could but see the force of our Lord's words, that he who is not gathering with him in this harvest work, gathering out of Babylon, is in opposition to him and hinders his work, it would help many such, we believe, to come forward courageously and take their stand on the side of the Lord in opposition to Babylon and every false doctrine and false system. True, the Lord with great forbearance permitted the wheat and tares to grow together, permitted the truth and the falsehood to be mixed together. But now we have come to the turning point, now we are in the separating time: he no longer says, "Let both grow together," but he says positively to those who are his, "Come out of her, my people," and all who are his people of the "more than conqueror" class will heed the voice and come out before the fall of Babylon – come out in time to help rescue others by their word and example, and to bring others of the truth-hungry sheep out of the Babylon creed-pens into the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, that we may be taught of God.

This message, "Come out of her, my people," is not to those who are still blind in Babylon; hence it is not the first message to

be given out at the present time. The light, the truth, the divine plan of the ages, is to be let shine; the errors of Babylon on various points are to be shown, and how these are dishonoring to God: then it is that the voice of the truth, the voice of these facts, will cry aloud to all who are truly the Lord's sheep, to separate themselves from such misrepresentation of the divine character and plan, in heart, in person, in purse. There are some of the Lord's people today who much remind us of Nicodemus of old – they are inclined to visit the Lord by night, to hold the truth in secret while giving their time, their influence, principally in opposition to the divine plan.

So long as any one is in this condition he cannot hope to make much progress in growth in grace, in knowledge and in the peace and joy and love and other fruits of the Spirit, now due to be developed and ripened in our hearts and lives. It is an element of the divine law that for every ray of light that we receive a certain amount of obedience and response must be expected: if therefore any would go on and grow in grace and grow in knowledge, he must practice the things which he has already learned, he must take the steps one by one as he comes to them.

### **THE SPIRIT OF DIVISION**

Even if we have come out of Babylon and taken our stand on the Lord's side the great Adversary pursues us, seeking to entrap and ensnare and to hinder the work in general. Strange as it may seem, unreasonable as it may appear, there are some who have recognized Present Truth who have realized that we are in the harvest time, that the separation of wheat from tares is in progress, that the great Reaper is present conducting this work, that under his conduct of the work they themselves were gathered out and have received many blessings, yet now they begin to scatter abroad, they hinder the harvest work, they attempt to sow discord amongst the under-reapers by saying all manner of evil

falsely against some of them, by traducing their characters, impugning their motives and by implication persuading those who have only gotten free from Babylon that the great Reaper himself has nothing to do in the matter, and that the proper thing is discord, dissension, slashing right and left to scatter abroad the wheat already separated from the tares.

"We are not ignorant of his devices," writes the Apostle concerning our great Adversary. (2 Cor. 2:11.) We know who is to blame particularly for the present attitude of some in opposition to the harvest work. We remember how he practiced similarly in the early Church; how he got up dissensions amongst the Lord's chosen twelve, disputing as to which should be greatest – as to which had accomplished the greatest service and would have greatest honor. We remember how his spirit actuated Peter, so that he tried to interfere with the Lord's consecration to sacrifice, and how the Lord himself rebuked Peter, saying, "Get thee behind me, Adversary; thou savorest not the things that be of God but the things which be of man." We remember Jesus' own words to that same disciple, saying, "Satan hath desired to have thee that he might sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee." Shall not these incidents from the typical harvest of the Jewish age have their weight with us in respect to the harvest of this Gospel age? Here, too, Satan is desirous to sift out some, and the great Chief Reaper is ready to aid all who desire his aid and succor. Here, too, we may expect to find some like Judas, of whom it is written, "Satan entered into him." – John 13:27.

Satan's work in the heart of Judas was a gradual one: evidently the love of money was the beginning of his fall into the Adversary's hands. With some today the love of money and business prosperity may be the power, the influence, which will lead them to become Satan's accomplices. But so far as our observation goes temptation today is more likely to be along other lines of selfishness – honor of men and desire to be thought great



and wise, to be leaders. As the spirit of selfishness undermined the loyalty of Judas to his Master, so a similar spirit of selfishness may today undermine loyalty to the Lord, his truth, his work, and thus lead on and on until Satan enters in, and the work of Satan is manifested more and more in the anger, malice, envy, hatred, strife and other works of the flesh and the devil, against members of the body of Christ, against under-reapers, and therefore against the great Chief Reaper, who declares that "he that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him"; and, "Whoso offendeth one of these little ones that [R3885 : page 345] believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea;" and again, "It must needs be that offences come; but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh." – Matt. 18:6,7.

The matter is an individual one, as stated in our text: therefore let each of us apply the matter to himself, and with the greatest of earnestness and solicitude inquire whether he is united fully at heart with the Lord, and whether his hands and heart and purse and every talent and possession are associated with the great Chief Reaper in the present harvest work – whether he is gathering into this barn, this garner, or whether he is doing a scattering work. The Lord indicates that his work is one, and that it is all under his supervision. Whoever, therefore, thinks otherwise – that he may do a separate harvest work, and that each of the Lord's people should do a separate harvest work, each according to the bent of his own mind, has evidently misunderstood the divine program.

All of the propositions of Present Truth harmoniously agree that the Lord is here supervising and conducting the harvest work, calling his own servants and reckoning with them. If therefore we have been separated from the world and from Babylon, in part or in whole, let us look well to it that our stand is either for or against the Lord from the moment that we recognize the work he is doing.

Hence every word and every act means to us responsibilities that it shall be for the Lord, for the truth, for the gathering of the saints, not in opposition to him and his, not to the scattering of his work. "He that is not for me is against me; he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Very soon, we trust, we shall render our accounts to the one who gave us this message, and our joy or our shame shall be in proportion as we have heeded his words, allowing nothing of selfishness or personal ambition to have any place in our hearts or conduct. Let us more and more seek exclusively to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his. – I Cor. 6:20.

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