

"THAT SERVANT" AND "HIS FELLOW-SERVANTS"

THE application to us of Matthew 24:45 some fourteen years ago, styling us "that servant," came not from us, but from one who is now our bitter enemy and who claims that while we did occupy such position we have forfeited it, lost it, to a successor. We have taken no part in the discussion which followed. The bruited of the matter amongst our readers came from our opponents. We have refrained from any allusion to that particular Scripture, except upon two occasions when it seemed necessary: (1) In our general treatise of the entire twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew in "Dawn-Studies," Vol. IV., Chapter XII.; and (2) when this passage occurred in one of the International Sunday School Lessons. Of late, however, the violent opposition of our enemies has aroused many of our friends to an examination of the subject. As a result, the question has become an important one in the Church. Our friends insist that this Scripture indicates that in the end of this Gospel Age the Lord would use not many channels for the dissemination of the Truth, but one channel, and that it would be the privilege of others of the Lord's faithful ones to be "fellow-servants" (co-laborers). They insist that the facts connected with this harvest time abundantly substantiate this interpretation. They hold that all of them received their knowledge of Present Truth directly from the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society's publications, or indirectly through those who have received their enlightenment through this channel. They are glad correspondingly to co-operate as "fellow-servants" with the Society's work, believing that thereby they are following the leadings of the Divine Providence, as well as the instructions of the Divine Word. They believe that such as do otherwise, oppose the Divine Word, antagonize the harvest work, and will bring injury upon themselves.

Our opponents are often bitter and sarcastic after taking the antagonistic position. They retort that the expression "that servant" should be understood to mean all the members of the Church of Christ, and that the expression, "his fellow-servants," is meaningless, because it refers to the same class. They declare that although it is true that they got their first enlightenment respecting the value of Christ's death as a "Ransom for all," and their first knowledge of the "Times of Restitution of all things," and their first appreciation of the "high calling," and their first knowledge of the Parousia and the harvest time of this age, and their first knowledge of the fulfilment of prophecies in connection with this harvest time, and their first understanding of the nature of man and the work of redemption, atonement and regeneration from this Society's publications, nevertheless they are of the opinion that all of these things were previously published by others, and they are seeking to find the books. They claim further that to apply this Scripture to us would signify that we are infallible.

Our friends reply that the Society has never made any claim to infallibility; that its publications are not written in that style; that they merely lay before their readers the Scriptures and show their meaning from the Scriptures, and leave the lesson or conclusion with each reader's own judgment. Further, they declare that if any book or set of books presents the Divine Plan of the Ages and the Scriptural interpretations set forth in the "Dawn-Studies" and other publications of the Society, they have never seen them, never heard of them, and do not believe that they exist, but would pay a handsome price for the loan of a copy. They point out that "The Watch Tower" never claimed to have originated the doctrines of Election and Free Grace, Justification and Sanctification, Restitution, Baptism, etc. They point out, indeed, that it is well known to everybody that thousands of books have been published on these subjects, some of them centuries ago; but they also point out that none of these subjects was ever

presented as now in the Society's publications; that these presentations of the past, instead of being enlightening, darken the understanding and confuse the head and heart and contradict each other, and that, on the contrary, all of these subjects in the Society's publications, are harmonized and unified as none would ever have supposed to be possible.

They point out that to attribute this harmony to human wisdom or to accident would be absurd; that it would be giving too much honor to any human being to suppose that after eighteen centuries of Christian conflict, passion and persecution because of inharmonies of understanding, any human being without special Divine aid should now arise who could at one moving of the wand, as it were, bring harmony and reason, beauty and light out of and into every part of God's Word. They declare that such a view would be much more difficult to take than that which they have adopted, based upon their understanding of Matthew 24:45 and co-related events of this harvest time. They declare that, to their judgments, there is no other interpretation of the facts before us than that presented in our Lord's promise; that at the appropriate time in the end of the age, in the time of his presence, he would bring forth from the storehouse of Grace, Wisdom and Truth things "*new and old,*" and that he would select at that time *one special channel* through which those blessings would be called to the attention of the household of faith – indicating also that a privilege would be granted to others who might join the service as "fellow-servants." They point out that such as have thus become "fellow-servants" have been blest and used in the harvest work, whilst others opposing have gone into the "outer-darkness" of nominalism as respects "harvest" truth and its service.

They point to the fact that many ministers and Bible students repudiate and condemn the Society's publications on the very score that it is absurd to expect at this day a complete harmony of

the teachings of the Bible, which have been fought over by the learned of the Church for centuries, and refuse, therefore, to examine the Divine Plan of the Ages, preferring to turn to the Evolution theory and Higher Criticism views of the Bible, saying that it consists of a parcel of "old wives' fables," which cannot be harmonized with themselves nor with reason.

Our opponents, unable to answer, are made correspondingly angry. Some of them fight the Society's publications publicly, while they study them privately for Scriptural interpretations which they can parade as their own and as proof that the Lord is not using one channel only, "that servant," for the bringing forth of the meat in due season to the household of faith. Others, more crafty, indirectly discourage the use of the Society's publications while, in a sense, praising them, and, if questioned, are obliged to acknowledge that the Society's literature was the channel through which the Lord sent them practically all that they know about the Bible and the Divine purposes. They seek to turn the minds of the enlightened ones in another direction by telling them that "each should dig" the jewels of Divine Truth for himself; that the Society's publications merely gave them the start on which now they should improve, so that eventually its teachings would be far in the background. These disloyal "fellow-servants" suggest further that there is danger of worshipping the Society and that to avoid so doing it is practically necessary to give it a kick or to turn their backs upon it. They say, Let us have a Bible study, but let us exclude the Society's publications! Let us give the impression that we are great Bible students and teachers who dug these Truths for ourselves. But let us put the matter more plausibly and more humbly by claiming that our only desire is to exalt God's Word and to study it alone!

Our friends reply that they are in no danger of worshipping the Society or anybody else; that their experience in man-worship and sect-worship are things of the past. They declare that they

were led out of those [R4482 : page 293] forms of idolatry and into the proper reverence and worship of God and his Word by the Society's publications and no others, and that they have never heard of any teachings which, in so clear and unmistakable language, guard the Lord's people against every form of man-worship, sect-worship, etc., and that no others so fully and thoroughly set forth the rights and liberties of the Lord's people as against the enslaving tendencies of the great Adversary and bishops, ministers and elders. They hold that Vol. VI. of "Dawn-Studies" is disliked on this very account by some who are desirous of "lording it over God's heritage." They point out that they themselves and their forefathers for generations had Bible classes and Bible studies all to no purpose until the Lord, in due time, sent them the "Bible Keys," through the Society. They point out that to ignore this leading of the Lord and to exclude from their study of the Bible the teacher sent of the Lord would be to dishonor the Lord who sent the same and to reject His helping hand; and that the only result that could be expected of such a course would be a gradual loss of light – a proportionate loss of the holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Truth, and eventually to reach the "outer darkness" of the world and the nominal-church, from which they were rescued by the Truth. They declare that this would correspond to a sow returning to her wallowing in the mire and the dog to his vomit, as the Apostle declares. They declare that to take such a course, to them would mean a lack of appreciation of having been called out of darkness into this marvelous light, a lack of appreciation of the light of "the day star" promised by the Lord as a precursory of the glorious sunrise of the new dispensation. [R4483 : page 293] – 2 Pet. 1:19.

They point out further that the "Dawn-Scripture Study" Volumes are practically the Bible itself in an arranged, systematic form; and that it is this very systematization of the Bible which brought them to their present enlightenment and joy in the holy Spirit. They declare that wranglings and speculations and guesses

respecting things not revealed in God's Book are what is often styled "Bible study," and that they are afraid of these and desire to keep close to the Lord and to the message which they believe that he has sent to them, and that, therefore, they prefer to study the Bible in the light and under the leading of the "Berean Studies" and the "Studies in the Scriptures," and to look for further light in the same direction and without expecting special revelations to their own brains or from a variety of directions. They declare that there are no other writings or teachings which can compare with the Society's in loyalty to the Bible, and that it is their decision, therefore, to hold fast to that which they have already attained and to beware of "divers and strange doctrines," fanciful interpretations, manufactured types, symbols and private interpretations.

"RULER OF ALL HIS GOODS"

Our opponents are ready to admit that the Lord has used the *Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society* as his channel or servant in forwarding the harvest message in a most remarkable degree – in a manner and to an extent hardly to be believed and never equaled – in many tongues and at the hands of many "fellow-servants," Colporteurs, Pilgrims, Volunteers, etc. They admit that there is no question that a remarkable service has been rendered, and hence that it is indisputable by any who believe that there is a harvest work in progress and that the Society has been a servant of the harvest message in a most profound and peculiar sense, even if they dispute that it has fulfilled Matthew 24:45, as being "that servant." Our friends, on the other hand, point out that very rarely, indeed, is there any quarrel or dispute over the privilege of being a *servant*, and that never in the world's history before has this passage been applied, and that very few would be either desirous of being "that servant" or capable of fulfilling that service. They point out that a servant is known by his service, and that if the service be shown to have been performed, the title of

servant is an appropriate one, although one not generally coveted. Those who have laid claims to being "some great one" have styled themselves in some fantastic manner Messiahs, Elijahs, prophets, etc., but amongst these none has ever been found to claim the title of "servant," nor to rejoice specially in *service* – particularly not *without money and without price*, but merely from love for the Lord, love for the Truth and love for the brethren.

But, retort the opponents, while we do not deny the *service* rendered, yet if we grant the application of Matthew 24:45 to be correct, then we are forced to apply the other part, the context, which says, "Verily I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods." That would mean that the "fellow-servants" and the "household of faith" in general might not expect to receive their spiritual meat from any other quarter than "that servant." We are opposed to this thought and hence opposed to the entire matter.

Our friends reply that it is with the Lord and with no one else to determine who and when and what shall be provided for the "household of faith"; and for him equally to decide whether he will send that spiritual food through one channel or through many channels. They urge that all who are hungering and thirsting after Truth, all who are looking to the Lord for their supply, all who are in a proper attitude of mind, meek and teachable, will be ready to say, "Lord, thy will be done in thy way! To thee we are indebted for every blessing, every mercy, every ray of light, and we prefer to receive it as thou dost prefer to dispense it! We have no wish or will to express! Our prayer is, Thy will be done!" They further urge that the opponents consider that the harvest message has been going forth for thirty-five years, and that if the Lord should change his program and his channel of sending the Truth at this late day, it would be very remarkable – less reasonable to suppose than that he would continue to use "that servant." They urge, furthermore, that all who cut loose from the Society and its

work, instead of prospering themselves or upbuilding others in the faith and in the graces of the spirit, seemingly do the reverse – attempt injury to the Cause they once served, and, with more or less noise, gradually sink into oblivion, harming only themselves and others possessed of a similarly contentious spirit.

OUR POSITION ON THE SUBJECT

From the first we have urged that this subject be not allowed to produce contention or bitterness of spirit. Let each reach his own conclusions and act accordingly. If some think that they can get as good or better provender at other tables, or that they can produce as good or better themselves – let these take their course. All who feel dissatisfied with the spiritual food which our great Master has privileged us to send broadcast to every nation *should certainly be looking anywhere and everywhere for something better*. Our wish for them is that they might find something better. If we were dissatisfied ourselves, or if we knew where something better could be obtained, we certainly at any cost would seek it. And how could we find fault with others for doing what we ourselves would do? Rather let us bid them God-speed in their search for something more satisfactory. With many of us the case is the reverse of this, for, with the poet, we say

"I had sought the world around
Peace and comfort no more found."

In the Divine Plan of the Ages we found something so far above our own conception and the conceptions of all others that we at once realized it to be *God's Plan*, of which he declares truly, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my plans higher than your plans." (Isa. 55:9.) We realize instinctively what a pearl of great price we have [R4483 : page 294] found – a matchless pearl – and that it would be the height of folly to look for any other that would compare with it. With the poet we declare,

"It satisfies our longings
As nothing else could do."

We confess, therefore, that we are not searching for other plans of the ages. At very most we look for additional scintillations of light which will make more harmonious and more beautiful than ever the great Divine Plan, which first stood clearly revealed to us in 1880.

We urge upon all those who do see eye to eye with us that, instead of quarreling with those who want something new or something better or something different, we merely let them go their way while we give special heed to the development of the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit in our own hearts and lives, and to the further dissemination of the glorious message to those who have the hearing ear. If from time to time the Lord shall permit Satan to sift his Church "like wheat," let us remember that our great Advocate's assistance in proper measure and power will bring to all who are *loyal at heart* the needed grace and strength for every temptation. He will not suffer such to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but with the temptation permitted will provide a way of escape. We must expect, however, that these siftings of the wheat are not only permitted but *intended to separate some*, and it is not for us to murmur or complain against Divine Providence in this matter. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Even though those who are being "sifted" have been very dear to us, as St. Peter and the other apostles were to the Lord, it is for us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. – 1 Pet. 5:6.

On the other hand, while remembering the Scriptural injunction to "mark them which cause divisions... and *avoid them*" (Romans 16:17), we should not allow any bitterness respecting them to enter our hearts or to escape our lips or our pens, no matter what they may say or do against us. "See that no

man render evil for evil nor railing for railing, but contrariwise." Let us be like our Lord who, when reviled, reviled not again. As we see some going blind respecting precious truths which they once saw clearly, it will properly grieve our hearts for them. But we are to remember that the Lord's Cause will lose nothing; that it is in the hands of the Omnipotent One, who is able to make all things work together for the fulfilment of the counsel of his own will – his glorious purposes. Would we smite the blind? Surely not! Then neither should we by act nor word be unkind to those who are "going out from us, because they are not all of us" – those who in this hour of temptation are being smitten down by the arrows of the Adversary because, from the Lord's standpoint, not deemed worthy of the necessary succor. – 1 John 2:19.

The three important lessons for the Lord's faithful to be sure that they have learned are these: **(1)** That meekness, humility, is of primary importance, not only to gain an entrance into the Lord's family, but also to maintain a place therein. **(2)** That obedient faith, abiding trust, is an indispensable quality, not only for the eternal future, but also for the maintenance of our proper relationship to the Lord in the present life. Without it we would wander and be uncertain in all our course. With it we may abide in meekness under our Lord's protecting care. **(3)** Love, the essence and sum of all the graces, must rule in our hearts richly, abundantly. A proper love for God will not only keep us very meek, very humble, very teachable, but will also give us great faith, great confidence in him and an attitude of heart which he will be pleased to guide aright. A love for the brethren will make us meek and gentle and willing to lay down our lives in their interest. If we know these **[R4484 : page 294]** things, happy are we if we do them.

But while we are willing that others should go anywhere and everywhere to find food and light to their satisfaction, strange to say, those who become our opponents take a very different

course. Instead of saying in the manly fashion of the world, "I have found something which I prefer; goodbye!" these manifest anger, malice, hatred, strife, "works of the flesh and of the devil" such as we have never known worldly people to exhibit. They seem inoculated with madness, Satanic hydrophobia. Some of them smite us and then claim that we did the smiting. They are ready to say and write contemptible falsities and to stoop to do meanness.

We say to ourself, O my soul, come not thou into their counsels and schemes. Abstain from them. Make the Lord, even the Most High, thy refuge and habitation, and fellowship thou with the saints of the Most High, who are meek and lowly of heart and whom he shall lead in his ways. "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, and standeth not in the way of sinners, and sitteth not in the seat of scorers, but whose delight is in the Law of the Lord."

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