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TYPICAL EXPERIENCES OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA

What a stenographer reported from one of Brother Russell's meetings.

BEFORE we leave the dear friends here to go to another city, some of you will wish to say, "Brother Russell, we may not see you again for quite a while; and we wish you would say something about the hopes of the Church for the near future. Do you think that the Church will be changed very soon?" We answer, We do not know. We admit that there are many things that we do not know. If we knew all about the Book of Revelation, we would get out the Seventh Volume very soon. There are a few things of which we are not just sure. We do not like to do any guess-work. We could guess about some things, but we do not allow ourself to guess. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." – 1 Peter 4:11.

"But, Brother Russell, what is your thought as to the time of our change? Were you not disappointed that it [R5845 : page 38] did not come when we hoped that it would?" you will ask. No, we reply, we were not disappointed. Two years before that time we pointed out in THE WATCH TOWER that we did not think the change would come October, 1914. But, Brethren, those of us who are in the right attitude toward God are not disappointed at any of His arrangements. We did not wish our own will to be done; so when we found out that we were expecting the wrong thing in October, 1914, then we were glad that the Lord did not change His Plan to suit us. We did not wish Him to do so. We merely wish to be able to apprehend His plans and purposes.

"What do you think of things now?" you ask. "What would you think are the present indications?" To this we say, We have already mentioned in THE WATCH TOWER and in talks given to the

friends what is our thought as to the type of Elijah and Elisha in the close of the earthly career of the Prophet Elijah. We will briefly refer to it again here, and perhaps might add a word further. We recognize that the Church of God is the antitype of Elijah because she is, with her great Head, The Christ of God. It is The Christ in the flesh that antitypes the Prophet Elijah. His experiences during his career as God's Prophet typified the experiences of The Christ class during all the more than eighteen hundred years of their earthly career. His closing experiences would parallel, we understand the Scriptures to teach, the closing experiences of the last members of the Christ Body in the flesh.

PASSING OF LAST CHRONOLOGICAL POINT A TEST

We remember that when the Lord would take up Elijah into the heavens He brought certain things to pass that would make a parallel to the taking away of the last members of Christ. We believe that this is a reasonable inference. We have seen how the Lord, upon the day that Elijah was to be taken away, sent him to four successive places – Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho and Jordan. At each of these different places Elijah evidently thought that the Lord would take him. And so it has been with us. During this Harvest of the Age the Lord, through His Word, has seemed to send His people to four different points of time – 1874, 1878, 1881 and 1914. At each of these points of time the watching saints who realized that the end of the Age was upon the Church have thought that the "change" might come. They watched for it. When they came to each of these points, the Lord said, "Go to another place." Finally we reached the last place of the four – October 1st, 1914. This was the last point of time that Bible chronology pointed out to us as relating to the Church's experiences. Did the Lord tell us that we would be taken there? No. What did He say? His Word and the fulfilments of prophecy seemed to point unmistakably that this date marked the end of the Gentile Times. We *inferred* from this that the Church's "change" would take

place on or before that date. But God did not *tell us* that it would be so. He permitted us to draw that inference; and we believe that it has proven to be a necessary test upon God's dear saints everywhere.

WHAT SMITING OF THE WATERS MAY MEAN

Did the Times of the Gentiles end by October 1st, 1914? It certainly looks very much as if they did. The great nations of the world there began to go to pieces under the terrible shaking process then begun. The shaking is still going on, day by day, week by week, and will continue until the work of destruction is complete. Do we see anything definite as yet as to when we are to finish our earthly course? We do not see anything positive thus far. If any of you find out anything, we wish you would tell us.

What do we expect? We expect just what the picture points out. Of late we have been thinking considerably of what took place when Elijah and Elisha came to the river Jordan. They stopped there and stood talking. Something must be done before they could go further. So the Lord's people have been standing for a time since we came to October, 1914. Then Elijah took his mantle, wrapped it together and smote the waters of Jordan. The waters divided to right and left, and the Prophets went over dry shod. After they had crossed, they went on, talking together. They had received no further instructions from the Lord. They simply walked on. Suddenly the chariot of fire appeared and separated them, and Elijah was taken away in the chariot by a whirlwind.

CHARIOT OF FIRE TO MAKE SEPARATION

What does this signify in antitype? We think that it signifies a division between the Little Flock and the Great Company. We are to be careful not to form a judgment as to who are to be of the Great Company, however. Some say to us, "What do you think of such a brother?" We are not to judge one another. It is not for us to say that such a one belongs to the Great Company class. We are to consider

all the friends as one people. Only the Lord knows who are His wholly faithful ones, and He is leaving the matter to be manifested at the end of the earthly career of the Little Flock. The Lord Himself will do the dividing.

A WORD OF WARNING

Right here we will give you a little illustration of how serious a mistake might be made along this very line. On one of our tours we were in a car with one of the Pilgrim brethren and another brother living in that vicinity, plainly dressed. The Pilgrim brother remarked, "That is Brother So-and-so, and I do not think that he is very much interested." He intimated that he thought the brother was one of the Great Company class. We asked him why he thought so. He replied, "I don't know; but he does not seem to take a very active part in the service nor does he attend the meetings." Now we will tell you the facts concerning this brother. That man whom the Pilgrim brother thought was probably a member of the Great Company class was one who had given about twenty thousand dollars to the Lord's work, and he was living in very humble circumstances and wearing very plain clothes because of his sacrifice in **[R5845 : page 39]** the interests of the cause of Christ. The Pilgrim brother knew nothing of this, and had no particular interest in the matter. Thus you see how any of us might be deceived in respect to each other. "The Lord knoweth them that are His."

When the Lord's time comes for separating His Little Flock class, He will make no mistake. It will be the Little Flock that will go in the chariot, and no others. Let us, therefore, keep *ourselves* in the love of God. Never mind what any one else thinks. Of course we are to love and serve the brethren; but even when we do our best, some of the brethren may misunderstand us. But trust it all in the Lord's hands. He will take care of the entire matter. Do not decide about anybody else; but let each of us *watch himself*, and see to it that he keep his heart in the right attitude toward the Lord and the

brethren. St. Paul says, "Judge nothing before the time." (1 Corinthians 4:5.) All will soon be manifested. We shall see the Elijah class taken away in the chariot; the others will not be taken. Then we shall see the radical division. We shall know all about it then. The Lord will attend to it.

THE "CHARIOT," THE "FIRE," AND THE "WHIRLWIND"

Now, as to the meaning of the fire and the chariot: Fire always represents destruction, and a chariot of fire would seem to signify some very trying experience that will separate the Elijah class from the Elisha class, and bring the deliverance of the Elijah class.

"Brother Russell, are you not afraid of alarming us?" some may ask. No! We are all very desirous of getting into the Lord's Chariot, surely. It is the best thing in all the world. "But it means trouble!" Well, we desire trouble, if this trouble will be our chariot to take us Home. We are waiting for it day by day. When Elijah's chariot came, it was in a whirlwind that he was carried into the heavens, into the atmosphere, beyond earthly vision. What did the whirlwind signify as regards the Church? "Does it mean more trouble?" you will ask. We think it does. Dear friends, we are waiting for that chariot and whirlwind. "What will it be?" Well, we know that the Lord pictures the great time of anarchy that is coming as a great whirlwind. He says, "Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." – Jeremiah 25:30-33; 30:23,24.

To our understanding the Elijah class will be amongst the first to be affected by the great whirlwind of anarchy. We believe it signifies that many of the Lord's people – all of the faithful at that time – will be taken from the present life in some anarchistic

movement. We would not talk about these things to the public; for the public would not be interested in them. The Master said, "Cast not your pearls before swine." We are talking about it here because we think that all here are deeply interested, and are expecting to share in the chariot and whirlwind experiences. Here is the point, then. We think that our final experiences will be during some kind of anarchistic uprising. For some time we have been wondering just how all the Church would be taken. If the "change" comes to each one by death in the usual way, it would seem very wonderful to see the consecrated all over the world die suddenly. Neither can they all die of old age; for this would mean that some would have to live a good many years yet. **[R5846 : page 39]**

THREE IMPORTANT POINTS

But here is the way the Lord pictures the matter: First, there will be the chariot of fire. We do not know what this will be; but we understand that some fiery experience will cause a separation between the two classes of the Lord's people. Then will develop the whirlwind of anarchy. Perhaps this will be mobs that will destroy the lives of the faithful ones. We do not know. We cannot now imagine just what it will be. We do not wish to think anything foolish; we are merely studying the type, or picture. We do not intend to do anything to get into trouble. To do so would be like what the Devil suggested to Jesus: "Cast Thyself down from the pinnacle of the Temple." We are to be just as wise, kind, meek, gentle and as faithful to the Lord as we know how to be, and then have our minds perfectly calm and restful. When the Lord's time for us comes, all will be right. Let us rest in His love and wisdom and care. What He provides for His children will be the very best thing for us, and we shall be glad to have it.

"Are you expecting the fiery chariot any minute now, or do you think it some little distance off – perhaps some months yet, or perhaps a year or more?" will be asked. At least a year, or probably

more, is my thought. Something else is coming first, dear friends. We do not as yet see clearly just what it is; but this matter of Elijah's rolling his mantle together and smiting the waters of Jordan seems to mean something, and also the crossing of the river. This picture is not given for nothing. "What does it mean?" you ask. Ah, we know that most prophecies are understood only after they are fulfilled! We might, however, have a suspicion. "What would that be?" Something like this: In Bible symbolic language, water represents Truth, and it also represents peoples. Both of these are given in Scripture as being symbolized by water. (Revelation 17:1; Jeremiah 51:12,13; Revelation 17:15; 22:1,2; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Ephesians 5:26.) Furthermore, Jordan means *testing*, or *judging down*. Now who or what would be judged in the antitype?

WHAT ELIJAH'S MANTLE MAY SIGNIFY

We answer, we believe that the peoples of earth, the public in general, are to be judged by the Truth. The peoples are represented by waters. It would seem that in some way the people are to be judged and tested; and that a division of public sentiment is to be caused, in connection with the Truth. Waters are to be separated from waters, people from people, the Truth being received by some and rejected by others. Elijah wrapped his mantle together and smote the waters; and they were divided. Elijah's mantle was the outward indication, or sign, of God's power with him, and represented God's power and blessing with the Church. The mantle was in Elijah's hand when he smote the waters with it. So the Church, it would seem, will use what is in their hand, the power and authority of the Truth, the power of God, in smiting the waters – peoples.

"Do you think that this has not yet taken place?" may be a question in your minds. We think it has not as yet fully taken place. "Do you not think that the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION has had a part in this?" It may be. "Will there be something more?" We do not know. We RATHER THINK THERE IS SOMETHING MORE. We

do not state this positively. We are keeping watch to see in what way God will exercise some very wonderful power causing some division as respects the Truth. We are merely thinking aloud with you. We are looking for some very pronounced division on the subject of the Truth, something that will eventually lead up to a [R5846 : page 40] great hatred. You remember that in our Lord's ministry He presented certain truths that caused the Scribes and Pharisees to hate Him. It was their hatred that led up to His arrest and crucifixion. The hate was there. They said, "We must kill Him."

We shall not do anything foolish; we shall not go out on the streets to stir up trouble. We are to exercise the spirit of a sound mind – gentleness, meekness, patience, brotherly-kindness and love. We are to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." (Galatians 5:22,23; Matthew 10:16.) All these instructions we must not forget. But when we see any trouble coming upon us when we are doing what is right, when we are obeying the Lord, then we are able to take it as from Him. If we do not manifest the Master's spirit, if we speak proudly or boastfully to people, then we shall have it to regret that we did not follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

So, then, you see what we are looking for. Whether this will take place in a few months or in a few years more we may not be sure. But we think we shall see something that will bring a division in the sentiments of the people before we get into the fiery chariot. And now, dear brethren and sisters, we leave you with these thoughts, asking God's blessing upon us all.

"Mine eyes can see the glory of the presence of the Lord;
He is tramping out the winepress where His grapes of wrath are stored:
I see the flaming tempest of his swift-descending sword:
Our King is marching on."

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