TIMELY GREETINGS

— The Only Peace of Mind —

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WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?
WHO MAY TAKE HOLD OF IT? AND WHO MAY MISS IT?

THE GIFT OF MIRACLES
ESPECIALLY HEALING AND SPEAKING IN TONGUES—WHEN, HOW, WHO?

TEXT FOR PRAYER

Faith and Prayer

"Through faith in Christ, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed.

'Ye are complete in Him.'

"Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together. In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that every one who would make his life work a success must understand. Christ says, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.'

He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal.

"For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received.

"We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised he is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most." – *Education*, pp. 257, 258.

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V. T. Houteff

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TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF
MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS
SABBATH, MARCH 25, 1950
MT. CARMEL CHAPEL
WACO, TEXAS

True Christianity is a growth. It is plant-like. Christ Himself is represented as a Branch (Isa. 11:1), and His kingdom as a mustard seed (Matt. 13:31, 32) which after it is planted becomes a tree, the greatest of its kind. But since the literal tree must necessarily feed on physical food, likewise the spiritual tree must necessarily feed on spiritual food, on such as the Branch Itself was fed:

"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good." Isa. 7:14, 15.

Surely all of us agree that this passage of Scripture is a forecast of the Emmanuel of Matthew 1:23 – Christ at His first advent. The fact, however, that Christ ate all manner of lawful food, and was even accused of being a "gluttonous man, and a winebibber" (Luke 7:34), eating with "publicans and sinners" (Mark 2:16), makes it transparently clear that this diet of "butter and

honey" is not literal. Moreover, the fact that butter and honey possess absolutely no virtue to endue one with wisdom and will to choose the good and to refuse the evil, no, no more than do other articles of food, shows conclusively that this "butter and honey" are figurative of something special, just as the fly and the bee of Isaiah 7:18 are figurative of Egypt and Assyria. And of what else could it be but of spiritual food, the kind that builds up moral character, that makes one "refuse the evil, and choose the good?" And from what source other than the Scriptures could such food come? And what else, moreover, could the honey represent but the sweet Spirit of God that blesses everyone's sincere study of and simple faith in the Word?

Manifestly, therefore, this butter-and-honey symbolism infallibly tells us that Immanuel, Christ, was enabled to discern and to overcome sin by His study of the Bible – by digesting Its contents and allowing them to become a part of Him. This was His sweetest delight, as the symbolical honey reveals. Thus it was that "He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (John 4:32), and, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4.

Accordingly, the truth is evident that Christianity is a spiritual plant, feeding on the Word of God as unfolded by the sweet Spirit of Truth. Consequently if Christ our Examplar thuswise "increased in wisdom..., and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52), then it is even more essential that we, His followers, live on the same Word, on the same butter and honey, if we are to possess true, life-sustaining, life-preserving Christianity. Indeed we are told precisely that in the

next verses of Isaiah's prophecy:

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; and it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land." Isa. 7:21, 22.

In these verses Inspiration directs our attention to three butter-producing creatures – two sheep and a young cow, and forewarns that only those who eat of their products will have the right to live in "the land" – in the land of God's people. None others, no, not another one, will be there.

Since, therefore, only those who eat of the butter, those who thus learn to refuse the evil and to choose the good, are to be permitted to live in the holy land, all the more obvious it is that the butter is figurative of spiritual food. And since its source of supply is the two sheep and the young cow, it is of absolute necessity that we explore in the realm of this Bible symbolism to find what they are.

The two sheep, of a kind and not young, are manifestly symbolical of the Old and New Testaments, the Word, which enables its recipients to "choose the good and to refuse the evil." And the cow being young, and therefore of later origin than the sheep, and its also being of larger size than they, it can accordingly only be figurative of inspired writings of later origin and of greater volume than the Bible Itself. The only such besides the Bible are those which bring to us "the testimony of Jesus:....for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy" (Rev. 19:10) – the inspired interpretation of the Scriptures.

It is also to be noted that this butter and this honey are produced in the Christian era, in the time when both sheep, both Testaments, are in existence, and also in the time when the Spirit of Prophecy is at work.

And what is the Spirit of prophecy? – The same chapter and verse give the answer:

"And I fell at his feet," at the feet of the one who unfolded the prophecy to John, *"to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."* Rev. 19:10.

Here it is seen that as the prophecies were unfolded to John by one of his brethren, thereby was revealed to him the Testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of Prophecy. Plainly, then, an inspired servant of God who bears a message to his brethren, bears the Testimony of Jesus to them. To illustrate: Suppose the Lord Jesus communicated a personal message to you by a messenger, would not His message be His testimony to you? And should God endow the messenger with the gift of His Spirit to unfold to you the prophecies which are in the Scriptures, would he not be coming to you with the Spirit of Prophecy?

Thus it is clear that the "Testimony of Jesus" and "the Spirit of Prophecy" are synonymous terms for a timely message sent from God – "meat in due season." The Spirit of prophecy, therefore, is God's means of communicating from Heaven directly to His church on earth, as well as of unfolding the sealed prophecies to her.

As we have already seen that the two sheep are symbolical of the Old and New Testaments.

we now see also that the "young cow" is symbolical of the inspired interpretations of the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy in our day. It is now obvious that the product of these three creatures necessarily must become our spiritual diet if we expect to be "left" and permitted to live in the Holy Land, and that there is no use of our thinking to abide the judgment in some other way. And if there remain any doubt about this, then consider please what the Apostle Peter says on the subject:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1:19-21.

Did you mark what Inspiration says? It plainly declares that the Scriptures are not privately interpreted – not without the Spirit of God in the man, not by the man alone, and not without God's own appointment. And the reason given, you note, is the very fact that prophecy did not come by the will of man, but by the will of the Spirit, through "holy men of God." This, brethren, is Heaven's law and order. And who are we to change it? To put your trust in private interpretation is therefore to barter your soul to man. Concerning such a perilous practice, the Lord commands:

"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. 2:22.

As revealed truth is unfolded only by the Spirit of Truth at a given time, then for one to reject such revelation, "meat in due season" (Matt. 24:45), is indeed to sin "against the Holy Ghost." Matt. 12:31.

Since it now is clear as sunlight that the ever-unfolding, Inspired interpretation of the Scriptures is the ever-living Spirit of Prophecy, the eyes of the church at work (1 Sam. 9:9), then to be without these spiritual eyes is to try to walk, as it were, in dense darkness.

The science of the process finds close analogy in that of the universally used electric current. Electricity goes into action only when the live wire (the positive) comes in contact with the ground wire (the negative). So it is that the church's contact with God's chosen instrument (the ground wire) fused to the Spirit of God (the live wire) – which together represent the positive and the negative – is what electrifies the church, and thus opens the line of communication between the church and Heaven.

In the logic of this illustration, it follows that Jesus Christ is the great dynamo, and the Father the power thereof. When, therefore, the whole church, not a member excluded, connects herself with Heaven's Power House, then the earth will be lightened with the glory of the angel (Rev. 18:1). (For this very reason the "laying on the hands" is the Biblical method of transmitting the Spirit of God from one person to another.) Consequently a church not having this vital connection with Heaven is a spiritually dead church, one which is bound to be "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev. 3:17. Hence likewise is every individual who is not in contact with the church. Only this power enables

the individual church member to choose the good and to refuse the evil, and to go through the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Accordingly, it is now seen anew that what is applicable to the church as a body, is applicable to the individual members of it.

The obvious conclusion from these scriptural facts is that the only people who will be spared and permitted to live in the Holy Land during the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5) are those who make it their chief business and habit to feast with delight (as the "honey" denotes) on the product of these three butter-producing creatures.

The calamity which is to befall those who refuse the butter and honey, and the deliverance which is to come to those who feed upon it, is depicted by the Revelator in another figure:

"And the earth helped the woman [church]*, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood* [the wicked] *which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed* [with those that are spared]*, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ....for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy."* Rev. 12:16, 17; 19:10.

This passage reveals that the remnant, those who are *left* after the earth swallows the dragon's flood which is now threatening to do away with the woman (the ever-living church), are the ones who as a group keep the commandments of God, and have "the testimony of Jesus Christ." It is *then*, not now, that the remnant as a body truly keeps the commandments of God, still has

the Spirit of prophecy in its midst, and is the remnant in *fact*, and no longer merely in prospect or in theory.

Since this separation of the "tares" from among the "wheat" – "the harvest" – is one and the same work with the Judgment of the living, then the only difference between the Judgment of the dead and the judgment of the living is that in the former the names of the wicked are removed from the books above, whereas in the latter the wicked are bodily swept away from among the living members of the Church. Not only the prophecies and parables here considered, but also the type (the atonement – Lev. 23:27, 29), including *Early Writings*, pg. 118 and *Testimonies to Ministers*, pg. 234, teach the same truth.

This is what the cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14) is; this is what the antitypical atonement is (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 399-402; 420-422; 428-430); this is what the judgment of the living is; this is what the purification of the church is (*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pg. 80). This is what brings the end of the world; and this is what restores eternity to Christianity.

Under the particular care of a never-erring "Husbandman," Christianity, as we have already seen, is a combination of both the human and the Divine. Moreover, with the use of the spiritual butter and honey, the saints are enabled to live a fruitful and useful life even now, and thuswise they are to survive the judgments of God.

So it is that while Christ Himself learned to refuse the evil and to choose the good by the use of this butter and honey, His followers who

are now making sure to be left living and to be taken to the Holy Land, will even there, we are told, feast on the product of the three aforementioned butter-producing creatures.

Here it becomes pertinent to inquire how early in the course of time did the spirit of Christianity originate:

"God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds." Heb. 1:1, 2.

This scripture reveals that Christ is not only our Saviour but our Creator as well; that He created not only our world but all other worlds too; and that He is one with the Father. It is for this reason that "God (the Father) said (to the son), let *Us* make man in Our image, after Our likeness." – Gen. 1:26. And while the Exodus Movement was afoot, all "did…drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." 1 Cor. 10:4.

Clearly, then, since the personality now called Christ, has been with God's people even from the dawn of history, during Old as well as New Testament times, Christianity on earth identifies Itself with the beginning of creation.

So Christianity which began with creation, Christ points out, is to the world what the hen is to her little chicks: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have

gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. 23:37, 38.

Christianity, moreover, is like a mother, "for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Isa. 66:8.

Christianity, furthermore, is like a father, "for I know him," says the Lord, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." Gen. 18:19.

Christianity, still further, is like a water well, for "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him," said Christ, "shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14.

Christianity is also like salt, for "Ye are the salt of the earth:" declared Christ, "but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Matt. 5:13.

Christianity, again, is likewise like unto a good home: "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be

the peace of thy children." Isa. 54:11-13.

Most essentially, Christianity is love: "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." Eph. 5:2.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Matt. 22:39. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

In addition, Christianity is like the wind: no one except God and the "born again" know either whence they come or where they go, for "the wind *christianity* bloweth where it listeth, and thou *the not-born again* hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so *imperceptible to the unborn again* is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8.

Accordingly, it is impossible for the non-Christian to know what real Christianity is. For this very reason the Scriptures emphatically warn: "...but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand." Dan. 12:10. Let the sinner, therefore, renounce his sin, pray for the Spirit of Truth, and then understanding will come to him. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon Him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the

heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. 55:6-9.

But Christianity is still more than all these. It is bread for the hungry, a home for the outcast, a wardrobe for the naked, a physician and an inn for the sick. In short, it is everything to everybody in the household of God. And here is the challenge to its adherents:

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" Isa. 58:7.

This challenge, Brother, Sister, cannot be met unless all wisely help in whatsoever capacity possible, remembering that no effort but that which demands a sacrifice, is rewarded. Because she gave her all, her living, the poor widow's (Mark 12:41-44) two mites did more than the dollars of the rich could ever do. Too, the widow of Serepta, used her last drop of oil and her last scoop of flour to feed the prophet of God, with no hope of ever getting more, but with only the prospect of starving, not sparing even her own son. To the contrary, though, her cruse of oil and her sack of flour never went empty (1 Kings 17:12, 15, 16), and she and her son lived on.

Abraham became the father of the faithful and a friend of God because he offered on the sacrificial altar his best and his all – his only son (Gen. 22:1-13).

In his day, Joseph became the world's saviour,

and second only to Pharaoh, because for chastity's sake he sacrificed his masterly position for a prison cell (Gen. 39:7-20).

Moses became the greatest emancipator and general of all time because he sacrificed the greatest throne in his day for the freedom of his brethren (Heb. 11:24, 25; Ex. 3:10).

Job's possessions and family were doubled because he patiently bore his afflictions in honor of God (Job 42:10).

Samuel became prophet, priest, and judge because of his faithfulness to his Divinely-appointed master, Eli (1 Sam. 2:18; 3:18; 7:6).

Elijah was translated for choosing to be a fugitive for Reformation's sake (2 Kings 2:1, 11).

Elisha was given a double portion of the Spirit of God, for burning all the bridges behind him in his stepping into the prophetic office to which he was called. Yes, he made it impossible for himself to go back to farming. Moreover, he faithfully ministered to Elijah night and day, and kept an eye on him until the "flying saucer" alighted to pick him up, and until he disappeared from sight (2 Kings 2:9-15).

David was made a king for risking his own life to save the life of God's people (1 Sam. 19:5; 2 Sam. 2:4).

Solomon became the wisest and the richest of all kings, for choosing above all else the gift of wisdom to judge God's people righteously (1 Kings 3:11-13).

The Apostles were rewarded in having their names engraved on the foundations of the Holy and Eternal City, because they counted not their lives dear for the gospel's sake (Rev. 21:14).

Luther became the father of Protestantism, for esteeming the Reformation of greater importance than his own life.

Henry Ford became the richest man in the world in his time, for trying to do for labor and for the poorer masses of the world more than did all his competitors.

Thus rises the great pyramid of historical fact that the men who have made the greatest success of life are those whose efforts have been centered, not in selfish interests, but in blessing others. No one has as yet been able to change this law. Why should we, then, play the fool by trying to change it? Whatsoever your aim in life may be, if you want success, then let your efforts be directed for the good of humanity rather than for the good of self.

Christ's own admonition is: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33.

Brother, Sister, no longer be heathen or Gentile; be Christian through and through. Be not like the self-centered, the proud, and the worldly-minded, for the competitive way ends in fool's paradise. It is the highway to hell. Shun it. Ponder the terrible pronouncement against the greedy shepherds of the day (Ezek. 34).

And now, turning back to Isaiah 58, we find that when Christianity fully awakes to this great necessity and does something about it, "*then*,"

promises the Lord, "shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Isa. 58:8-11.

Now the manifest truth is that if time should last, and if we are to stay in the pathway of true Christianity where the light shines, then all must do something about this badly neglected work of caring for the needy, for it cannot be accomplished from one central location, but must necessarily be localized to every state and country wherever the message of the hour takes "root downward and bears fruit upward." Isa. 37:31.

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." Matt. 25:34-36.

Our duty, though, is to heed not only this

injunction, but all that Inspiration has set before us. All of it must become a part of our beings, as does the food we eat, if we are to enjoy all God promises, and to become heirs of the Kingdom eternal. This is the bright side of the picture.

But, sadly, there is also the dark side. Close up in the foreground is the patriarch Lot. His selfishly choosing for himself all the fertile land of the plain, and leaving the barren hills for his elderly uncle, Abraham, did not yield him the fruit he expected. Even though he prospered for a while, yet when he was finally through with Sodom, he went out the poorest of the poor (Gen. 19:15-17).

Pharaoh and his great men, endeavoring to keep the people of God in slavery forever, were engulfed by the Red sea, and buried alive in the midst of it (Ex. 14:22, 23, 38).

For cheating Naboth out of his vineyard and for taking his life, Ahab, king of Israel, and all his household, died at the edge of the sword (1 Kings 21).

Those who cast the three Hebrews into the fiery furnace, were themselves destroyed by its flames (Dan. 3:22), just as those selfish, greedy, cruel men who threw Daniel into the lion's den, were themselves finally devoured by the hungry beasts (Dan. 6:24).

Haman erected gallows upon which to swing Mordecai, but ended up swinging upon them himself (Esther 7:10).

For taking to himself the glory and credit for his great speech, Herod was eaten by worms (Acts 12:23).

For the price of a few paltry coins, Judas betrayed his Master unto death, and then, mocked to madness by that woeful wage, he turned upon himself the greedy and treacherous hand which took it, and therewith brought himself to an accursed and violent end and a pauper's grave, even before Christ was nailed on the cross (Matt. 27:5; Acts 1:18).

Indeed "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." Rev. 13:10.

Thus the immutable law of retribution still exacts an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Oh! so verily true, whatsoever one sows, that shall he also reap (Gal. 6:7).

These outstanding examples merely touch the scroll of history. Thousands of others might be added, to say nothing of the countless unrecorded ones since the dawn of time.

Thus in this all-revealing beam of Heaven's great searchlight of truth are clearly set apart the "two ways for travelers" – the false way, pretentious and loose and broad, which the many are traveling unto destruction; and the true way, unpretentious and strait and narrow, which the few are traveling unto life. With both ways now standing flooded with light from beginning to end, the traveler is able to see the entire length of each way, and therefore to know what to expect by traveling the one or the other. Why not, then, choose to go the way which leads to life, security, and happiness, and forever shun the one which leads to sorrow, poverty, and death? Why longer fool oneself in venturing to obtain God's faithful promises by running from a lo here to a lo there, from

this quack to that one? Why not go after life's blessings in God's way? Of course all God's ways are contrary to man's, but if they were not, how much better would they be than our own? "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." Isa. 55:8.

Finally, matured Christianity is the image of God, in His people when they are full-grown; – when they are gathered one by one out of all nations and brought into "their own land" (Ezek. 34:11-13); where and when their blood is cleansed, their stony hearts taken from them, and hearts of flesh with the law of God engraved thereon are given them in victorious and jubilant exchange; when they all know and serve the Lord; for declares the scripture: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them." Ezek. 36:26, 27. Thus it is they are then and there made ready for translation.

Which now will it be with us – the way glorious or inglorious, of serving God and others, or Satan and self? To serve God and mankind is noble, but to serve Satan and self is base. Shall we not, then, gladly choose to feast on God's butter and honey so that we may know the difference between good and evil, and learn to choose the good and to refuse the evil? Shall we choose to be spared from destruction, and to be taken to "the glorious land"? God forbid that any turn down His most gracious invitation. It is now up to each to either take hold of or to miss what

Christianity has for him. I plead with you to make it your chief business to obtain the promised blessings, that you may escape the destruction of the wicked, of the unbelieving and doubting, and be "left" forever to enjoy the promise:

"And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:... And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.... For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.... Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Isa. 4:3, 6; 51:3, 11.

TEXT FOR PRAYER
The Barren Tree

I shall read from *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 217, 218, beginning with paragraph one:

"The barren tree receives the rain and the sunshine and the gardener's care. It draws nourishment from the soil. But its unproductive boughs only darken the ground, so that fruit-bearing plants can not flourish in its shadow....

"With what unwearied love did Christ minister to Israel during the period of added probation.... So His care and labor for you are not lessened, but increased. Still He says, 'I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.'

"'If it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that'

"The heart that does not respond to divine agencies becomes hardened until it is no longer susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Then it is that the word is spoken, 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'"

This parable explains that Christianity is plant-like; it is like a fruit tree. Moreover, it explains that God is very patient with us in our Christianity, for in the parable only after the third fruitless year would the Lord consider cutting down the barren fig tree, and even then He was convinced to wait still another year. Thus we see that we are given plenty of time in which to make good, – plenty of time to begin bearing fruit. There is, nevertheless, as in the parable, no fruitless tree to be spared beyond the fourth parabolic year.

THE GIFT OF MIRACLES

ESPECIALLY SPEAKING IN TONGUES AND HEALING,

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TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS
SABBATH, APRIL 22, 1950
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Never before was the doctrine of miracles, especially of tongues and of healing, so variously agitated, urged, and practiced as it is throughout Christendom today. Yet never was there greater doubt as to the genuineness of the manifestations. And when confronted by the agitators of these miracles, those who do not believe in or accept them, nor possess their power, resort to saying just about anything and everything they can think of in their effort to counter the phenomena and to comfort themselves with their limited spiritual attainments. To clear away the smoke which has resulted from this fiery issue between these two hostile camps of Christians, and to expose the truth on the subject, which the master enemy has so completely covered up, is Inspiration's purpose herein.

Basic to a right understanding of the entire subject is the fundamental fact that on the day of Pentecost the disciples truly spoke in all the languages of the people that were then present.

From this pivotal point, no one can diverge, and yet believe the record, or know the truth it contains:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." Acts 2:1-11.

Although this subject is confounded by controversy, yet there stands forth out of it the indisputable fact that, regardless of anyone's claims, no other sect of people, since the miracle-

endowed disciples passed away, have possessed the gift which all of the 120 received on the Pentecost. Hence the plain truth is that that gift subsequently lifted it's wings, as it were, and departed from among men, as verily as did the disciples themselves, and that never since that day has it remanifested itself.

Would any take issue with this assertion, then all that is necessary to discredit it is for them either to open their mouths and speak the languages of us all today, as the apostles spoke the languages of the people in their day, or to produce historical record of such a manifestation since then. But in the continued absence of such evidence, what then? Will this gift ever remanifest itself? If so, when? Why not now?

In order satisfactorily to answer these questions, we must first consider the conditions upon which the early disciples of Christ received the gift of miracles, for only similar conditions will bring similar results. First of all, everyone of the disciples, it will be remembered, came to one accord (Acts 2:1) before they received the gift. Before the Pentecost, though, they were jealous of one another and were desiring to excel one another in position, prestige, and all else. Christendom today is even worse off; in fact, it is worse than at any other time. Never before has there been such controversy, such wrangling, such accusing and damning, in trying to exalt self and down the other. This is not, in particular, with regard to the fact that one sect disagrees

with another, for all know that were there no differences, there would be no sects. Rather, what is of special concern is the fact that scarcely even two individuals within one sect agree on all points of teaching and practice. And besides being rife with dissensions, divisions, and bigotries of every kind, every denomination in Christendom is, in addition, shot through and through with every other spiritual ill. And who can deny it?

Long before these sad conditions developed, the Lord forewarned that men would fall asleep and let the Devil sow his "tares" among the "wheat" (Matt. 13:25, 28). For how long? – "Until the harvest." And "in the time of harvest," saith the Lord, "I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." Matt. 13:30.

Since it is therefore strictly Biblical that God will not bestow the gift of miracles upon a people other than those who as a group come to one accord, who come to "see eye to eye" (Isa. 52:8), and since the Spirit cannot effect this unity and harmony now while the tares are commingled with the wheat, then all might as well reconcile themselves to the educative and redemptive discipline of waiting on the Lord until "harvest" – till the tares, the discordant or false ones, are purged out. Those who will not wait, but are impatient to possess the power right now to work wonders, will beguile themselves with a

spurious gift. Bent on having the gift of miracle-working power that is being acclaimed rather than the gifts made available for the hastening of the harvest, they satisfy themselves with the counterfeit which is current, just as Pharaoh satisfied himself with the counterfeit serpents which his great men brought forth against the serpents of Moses (Ex. 7:10-12). If these counterfeit miracle-workers and miracle-hunters of today will not repent themselves of this folly, then they will have to pay the penalty for playing the fool.

What then is the truth about this gift? Are we to understand that the gospel work will close without it? Inspiration does not remain silent on the question, but, as we shall see, makes plain that the gospel work will never close, "the harvest" never be garnered in, without a world-wide manifestation of the gift of Miracles, including the gift of tongues.

But, you may say, if the Angels, not men, are to separate the good from the bad, and thus end "the harvest," then of what use and benefit will the gift be to mankind, if there are no more souls to save after that? It is precisely here at this clouded point in the way, that the church needs light lest she blindly plunge on and lose her way in the dense darkness ahead.

To get into the full beam of light, we must first face the fact that the pre-pentecostal harvest took place in a self-deceived church, the Jewish; and through miracle-working power manifested by

Christ Himself, it yielded the 120 disciples, the first fruits of those who are to be resurrected. Whereas the post-pentecostal harvest took place among the nations; and through miracle-power manifested by the Spirit-filled 120 disciples, it yielded an innumerable multitude of converts to Christianity (Acts 2:41, 47), the second fruits of those who are to be resurrected.

Now to summarize the types before the Pentecost: (1) the first fruits were numbered; (2) they came exclusively from the church itself; (3) the miracles then wrought were by Christ Himself.

Now coming to the types after the Pentecost: (1) the second fruits were not numbered; (2) they came from the nations; (3) the miracles then wrought were by the numbered ones (the 120), the first fruits.

Accordingly, the antitypical Pre-pentecostal harvest takes place in a self-deceived church, the Laodicean, "the house of God"; and through miracle-working power manifested by Heaven itself in the angels (Matt. 13:39), it yields the 144,000, the first fruits of those who are never to die. Whereas the antitypical post-pentecostal harvest takes place among the nations; and through miracle-working power manifested by the Spirit-filled 144,000, it yields the great multitude which no man can number (Rev. 7:9), the second fruits, of those who are never to die.

This same truth in different aspects is figured forth in Daniel's, chapter two prophecy:

"…a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet,…and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.…and in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, and…it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." Dan 2:34, 35, 44, 45.

What smites the image? Is it not the stone which Daniel reveals is symbolical of the Kingdom of God restored? Also keep in mind the fact that the image is not smitten by the stone until after it (the stone) is cut out of the mountain, without hands, and that afterwards it grows and fills the earth, thus in turn becoming a mountain of itself. In elucidation of this truth, the prophet Isaiah adds:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall

go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Isa. 2:2, 3.

Thus as the stone, supernaturally cut out of one mountain, supernaturally turns into another mountain, then fills the whole earth, it reveals the process of the prophecy's turning into history: that the stone (in that it is to grow) is symbolical of the first-fruits in the kingdom; that the infant kingdom begins with the 144,000 "servants of God" (Rev. 7:3); that consequently the church of Laodicea (in that it is the last in which the wheat and the tares commingle, and therefore the one in which the wheat, the 144,000 first fruits, is harvested) is necessarily the mountain out of which the stone, the first fruit of the kingdom, is cut or taken from.

Further, it is seen that their being "cut out without hands," without human aid, obviously points out the fact that they are garnered by the angels; that their increasing, then, as the growth of the stone reveals, is the result subsequently of the gathering of the second fruits out of all nations, causing the mountain or kingdom, to fill the earth; and that this super-natural work of cutting out the stone, of separating the 144,000, the nucleus of the kingdom, is the purification of the church.

Finally, since the stone, as has been seen, is cut out – the infant kingdom set up – "in the days *of* these kings" (the toe-kings), not after their days, and since the 144,000 "servants of God" stand on mount Zion (Rev. 14:1), it conclusively follows that the stone kingdom in its beginning

is set up in the Holy Land, while the toe-kings are yet in existence.

Beyond question, therefore, the 144,000 guileless servants of God (Rev. 14:5), composing the government of God in its beginning, the stone which smites the image, and which subsequently becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth, are instrumental in the eventual overthrow of all earthly governments. Accordingly, therefore, of who else at that time in all the world, of who else indeed but themselves, could it be written:

"…they are men wondered at;…a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations." Zech. 3:8; Joel 2:2.

"And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.… Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.…The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the Lord of hosts is His name. Thou art My battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms; and with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider; with thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in

pieces the young man and the maid; I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers." Mic. 5:7, 9; Jer. 51:19-23.

Who would dare question that in prophecy these are the people and this is the church that completes the work – the only people and the only church that will possess all the gifts of the spirit, from the gift of prophecy to the gift of government and gift of miracles; that these gifts are given them for the achieving of their crowning work of lightening the earth with glory (Rev. 18:1), of "preaching this gospel of the kingdom in all the world for a witness unto all nations," thereby gathering God's people, the second fruits, tare-free ("My people"), out of Babylon (Rev. 18:4). Out of every nation and kindred and tongue and people (whom Babylon rules), they bring "their brethren" into the church purified (Isa. 66:19, 20), the kingdom of God on earth in its infant restoration.

Prophetically envisioning in the long ago this glorious day of triumph for the people and the church of God, and for the "everlasting gospel," Inspiration jubilantly declared:

"…Mighty miracles were wrought, the sick were healed, and signs and wonders followed the believers. God was in the work, and every saints, fearless of consequences, followed the convictions

of his own conscience, and united with those who were keeping all the commandments of God; and with power they sounded abroad the third message...." – "Early Writings", pg. 278.

"And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." Rev. 9:6.

"...the swords that were raised to kill God's people broke and fell as powerless as a straw...." – "Early Writings", pg. 285.

"Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain....Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." Zech. 8:3, 22, 23.

Thus illuminating in particular the tongues question, Zechariah's prophecy reveals that in the gathering time, in the time when God Himself calls the church "a city of truth," a "holy mountain," the time in which nations go forth to seek the Lord and to invite others to come with them, then it is that the whole church, every

active soldier in the gospel army, will have the gift of tongues, as is pointedly indicated by the affirmation that "ten men shall take hold *of all the languages* of the nations." The universal significance of this number is confirmed by the ten toes of the great image of Daniel 2, by the ten horns of the beast of Daniel 7 and of Revelation 13:1, by the ten servants in the parable of the ten pounds (*Luke* 19:12-25), and by the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-12) who are symbolical of the whole church, while the five wise virgins (the "wheat") and the five foolish virgins (the "tares") are still commingled. In all these as in all other instances, the number ten is numerically symbolical of Universality.

Just as conclusive as is Zechariah's prophecy on the genuine gift of speaking in tongues, are Joel's, Micah's, Jeremiah's, *Early Writing's*, and the Revelation's prophecies on the other gifts of miracles, including immunity to death, to be manifested among God's people. Continuing with Joel's prophecy, we see the gifts are bestowed on both old and young:

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.... And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Joel 2:23, 28.

Here, too, in plainest terms is set forth the truth that after, not before, the former and the latter rain (both of which are figurative of freshly revealed truths coming directly from the Throne of God, preceding the harvest), during the time of the great "harvest," during the gathering of the people, these gifts of miracles will be restored. The result of God's restoring them is graphically pictured by both Isaiah and Micah in their almost identical words:

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Mic. 4:1, 2.

In addition to the testimony of the types, here, from the mouth of at least seven witnesses (John, Micah, Joel, Daniel, Zechariah, Isaiah, Christ Himself) is "the more sure word of Prophecy," revealing the set time for the gift of miracles.

In summary, their faithful testimony is that the remanifestation of the gifts, among men, will be (1) after, not before, the latter rain is poured out; (2) after the stone is "cut out of the mountain," not before; (3) the time when the Lord is gathering the second fruits from

the "east" and from the "west"; (4) when Zion and Jerusalem are "called a city of truth, the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain" (holy kingdom); (5) when "the inhabitants of one city," shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also."

Thus the Lord will free His people from both sin and sinners, keep them apart for evermore, and endow them with all miracle-working powers. Does He do this because they have been good? or for His name's sake? Here is His own answer:

"Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you

to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God." Ezek. 36:22-28.

Note how clear these verses make the picture – that what God does for His people, He does, not because they are worthy of it, but for the sake of His own name; that He does it not before, but after, He takes them out of all countries and brings them into their own land; that He then and there cleanses them and changes their hearts. All of which shows that as long as His people are commingled with the tares, and live among the Gentiles, they can never be fitted for translation. Obviously, therefore, the land of our fathers is to be our final and superb dressing chamber to fit us for the society of pure, sinless, eternal beings.

Do we see, then, as plain as we should, that to fail to heed the truth of this most momentous event in all church history, is to forfeit the gift of miracles, fitness for translation, and the right to live and reign with Christ during the thousand years? We dare not let the Enemy cheat us of this new-heart fitness for Heaven.

This ingathering is indeed to be the second exodus, and it is to be exactly as the Lord has said:

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that

the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea....like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." Isa. 11:11, 16.

"And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." Hos. 2:15.

"...instead of giving all for Christ, many have taken the golden wedge and a goodly Babylonish garment, and hid them in the camp. If the presence of one Achan was sufficient to weaken the whole camp of Israel, can we be surprised at the little success which attends our efforts when every church and almost every family has its Achan?" – "Testimonies", Vol. 5, pg. 157.

Hence the reason for the imminent purification of the church, the destruction of the Achans of today, in preparation for the antitypical crossing of the Jordan.

It is now to be considered how this work of ("shaking"), separating, will begin, and also how the church is to hear of it. Years ago, the Spirit of God opened up the truth in vision:

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had

seen," declared the recipient of the vision, *"and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the Truth Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people."* – "Early Writings", pg. 270.

In this vision, we are introduced to a mighty message that is to be carried to the Laodiceans, and that is to commence the shaking among God's people. Then in subsequent vision and testimony, we are given to see the glorious sequel to this shaking.

"…Mighty miracles were wrought, the sick were healed, and signs and wonders followed the believers. God was in the work, and every saint, fearless of consequences, followed the convictions of his own conscience, and united with those who were keeping all the commandments of God; and with power they sounded abroad the third message." – *Id.*, pg. 278.

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the

dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." Isa. 35:4-6.

"…It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth. And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. God's people will not find their safety in working miracles; for Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought. God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Ex. 31:12-18…." – Testimonies, Vol. 9, pg. 16.

Envisioning this great day of God's power, the "gospel prophet," too, focuses our eyes upon those who, heeding "the straight testimony," survive the ordeal of the shaking, and behold face to face those wondrous scenes of future glory:

"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go

no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby….And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Isa. 33:20, 21, 24.

Then to this already glorious picture, Inspiration adds still another enlightening and heartening facet:

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call…. But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation." Joel 2:32; 3:20.

"But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions…. And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." Obad. 1:17, 21.

These two prophecies of deliverance and of subsequent events, vividly reveal the wonder-working power which is to invest those who endure the swiftly approaching "great and dreadful day of the Lord."

And now as the day "hastens on apace" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pg. 80), to engulf in ruin the Laodiceans who turn a deaf ear to the message which causes the shaking, virtually none but the sick, the afflicted,

the outcasts, and those from the streets and the lanes, will be humble and lowly enough to respond to the warnings, to experience the transforming power of divine grace upon their hearts, the progressively sanctifying impartation of righteousness by faith, and to be among the gathered ones, as Inspiration thus further discloses:

"And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Isa. 11:12.

"Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." Luke 14:16-21.

"…The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Dan. 12:10.

Who are wise to understand? Are you, Brother, Sister? Will you act *now*, while there is time? Will you face the picture and get ready to meet the situation? Will you? Before the Spirit of God leaves you? and the Enemy secures final advantage over you? Will you realize that as he beguiles the rich with vanities and grinds the poor with cares, he will use every weapon he has to dishearten, discourage, and scatter all who accept the Lord's merciful invitation to His supper?

Moreover, as sure as the Devil lives, he will employ every possible agency to either add to God's Truth, or to subtract from It, aggravating and disheartening, especially capitalizing on the misfortunes and afflictions of the saints, to thus secure their down-fall if possible. Principally will he depend upon two of his most powerful and successful agencies – extremisms – one pushing to the right and another to the left: In an effort to scatter as many as possible away from the center-path of light he will endeavor to drive one class into the fires of fanaticism, and to plunge another class into the icy waters of unconcern. To this end he will seek to convince the former class that their afflictions and misfortunes are the evident results of imperfect obedience to present truth, and will mock the latter class as fanatically strict in their course of faith.

The only ones that will endure to the end will be those who carefully watch their steps from being carried away either by his additions to, or by his

subtractions from, the works of Inspiration.

The informed, however, will rejoice rather than be pushed and driven to despair. Nothing, not even the afflictions of Job, will discourage them, for they will be wise and will understand: they will know the truth, and the truth will set them free from Satan's snares. They will remember that the blind man (John 9:1-3) was born blind, not because of someone's sin, but only that the Son of Man might be glorified in him. They will, as well, consider that both Lazarus and Dorcas took sick and died, not because they were the biggest sinners of the day, but that the Son of God might demonstrate that He has power not only to heal the sick but also to raise the dead at His will. They will perceive that afflictions and misfortunes that have come upon them, have not drawn them away from God, but rather have drawn them closer to Him; that they are better off to go into the kingdom, poor, maimed, halt, and blind, than to go into perdition, rich in houses, lands, oxen, and health or whatsoever.

With tears of joy over His forgiving her her great sins, Mary Magdalene therewith washed her Saviour's feet, and wiped them with her hair, then breaking the precious alabaster box, anointed His head with its ointment. All the while this was taking place, Judas' greedy hands were twitching for the price of it to fatten his purse, though at the same time he was pretentiously professing deep love for the poor! This hypocritical profession, while tabering upon his breast,

as it were "with the voice of doves," he sought to pass off as genuine love for others, by accusing Mary of extravagance and waste, and Jesus of vanity and waste.

The informed and discerning will spot such false brethren in their midst, and will know that if God wants His faithful ones sick, they will gladly suffer sickness for His sake; that if He wants them well, they will praise His holy name for health and strength to enable them to do something for the feeble, the disabled, the sick, and the suffering; that if He wants them dead, then they cannot live and will gladly die; that if He wants them living, they cannot and will not want to die; that whatever He wants, this is what and will gladly take. Their hope will be in Him only. They will close their ears to all who in one way or another seek to reprobate Truth's cause today; they will not listen to gossip; they will be confident that God is at the head of the work, that He Himself is attending to His business. They will know that all who remain in the pits of falsehood and unrighteousness will finally go into the "bottomless pit" of perdition.

The lessons, too, from Job's trials will be for their learning, hope, and courage. They will understand, and consider well the fact, that there were Jobs before the Job of the Bible, that there were Jobs since him, that there are Jobs today, and that there will be Jobs till Kingdom come. Their faith in God will be in truth and in

confidence, whether in weal or in woe, in sickness or in death, and nothing will be able to move them from Heaven's message for the day. They will know that it is to be either their life or their death, and to life will they cling. They will not be found murmuring, doubting, accusing, or despairing, for whatsoever their lot while inside God's hedge, they will know it is His will for them. Every one of them will with heart and soul and in certainty say:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore." Ps. 121:1-8.

In the cumulative light now shining on the much mooted question of tongues and other miracles, none need longer continue in darkness, mistake, or confusion as to the nature, character, and purpose of the true miracle-working power, and the time for its manifestation. Sad to say, though, multitudes of uninformed and misinformed will continue to get hooked as they jump at hooks bated with miracle-promises dangling invitingly

from the lines of so-called miracle-workers here, there, and everywhere, thus going from bad to worse, squandering their time and their money, their life and their health, their hope and their faith.

No saints will pray, then wonder if God has heard and answered their prayers. They will know and rejoice in faith that He has heard and answered them in His own way, even though it be entirely contrary to that for which they have prayed. They will do what they can in God's way, accept the help He provides, and know that it is "better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." Ps. 118:8.

Since the time for God to exalt any group of people with a demonstrational miracle-working power has not yet come, though it is indeed fast approaching, and since you brethren know the prophecies on this subject, then if you heed them, how fortunate and happy you will be in sparing yourselves from running hither and yon in search of a miracle-working power where there is no genuine.

If you, Brethren, stay inside God's hedge of inspired revelation, and walk with Him as did Enoch of old, you will have Him by your side every step of the way. So whatever your burden, leave it with Him, and He Himself will bear it for you to triumph. Know that He has heard your prayer, and that He will grant your request as He sees fit to carry out His plan

for you and for His gospel today.

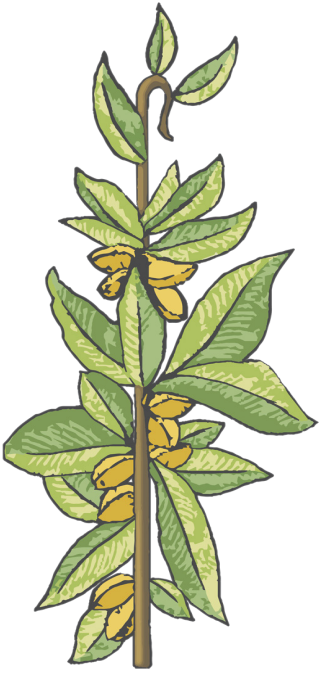
Miracle-mongers and miracle-hunters, fanatics all, bear in mind, may become dangerously subversive, ready to sabotage everything that is not in accordance with their thinking. Loose and rattling tongues will endeavor to shake the faith of us all. The ones, though, who bear the heaviest burden of feeding the flock with "meat in due season" will be the Devil's main targets. At just such a time as this, these devoted followers of God will profit most by the Lord's advice:

"Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." Mic. 7:5-7.

It will be discovered that there will be thousands of voices, some from professed believers, and some from those who fight against the faith of the saints, one voice condemning one thing, and another condemning another thing, and what one condemns, another will approve. But when held close to the light of God's word, all their discordant philosophizings and murmurings, their man-made plans and carnal ideas, will be seen to be but a tumult of envy, jealousy, pride, self-opinionation,

hatred, malice, politics, greed, prejudice, and every other selfishness. These unfortunate, self-sent ones, being yet in spiritual darkness, doubtless imagine themselves to be working for God with zeal and energy. But one day they will horrifyingly discover that they have been working against the Lord, as Saul of Tarsus discovered about himself. May the prayers of the saints awaken them, and put them working for the Lord, as the prayers of Stephen caused Saul to become the great Apostle Paul for both Jew and Gentile. And may he that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit saith, and hold fast that which he hath lest the enemy deceitfully take it from his grasp.

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