

## WHAT HAPPENS IN A TIME OF HARVEST

(Discourse by Br. Ted Smith at Seattle convention, Saturday, April 11, 1981.)

We as Bible Students have learned from the Scriptures that there are three main ages in the Divine Plan, and that each age ends with a harvest. The work of the Jewish Age Harvest is said to be the separation of wheat from chaff—the wheat is gathered into the garner and the chaff is burned up with unquenchable fire. The work of the Gospel Age Harvest is spoken of as the separation of wheat from tares—the wheat is gathered into the barn, and the tares are gathered into bundles for burning. The work of the Millennial Age Harvest is said to be the separation of sheep from goats—the sheep are set on the right hand of the shepherd and the goats are set on the left hand of the shepherd. The sheep “inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world;” while the goats are consigned to “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. 25:34 and 41) The one who does the separating work, in all three cases, is the Son of man, the Lord himself. He is the reaper. He has assistants, but He is the one who directs the assistants as to just what should be done.

The understanding that there is a HARVEST at the end of each age is very important information to us. It is of great practical value for it enables us to understand what is supposed to take place at the end of each age. It also impresses upon us that people who have dealings with God, or whom God deals with, are held accountable for their deeds, and they are dealt with accordingly—there is always a Harvest!

In the case of Israel, for example, the whole nation was under inspection by our Lord—a small remnant of the nation were gathered out and specially dealt with, while the rest literally went into a time of trouble which ended Israel’s career as a nation in the year 70 A.D. The way individuals and the nation reacted to the teachings of Jesus determined the fate of the individuals and the fate of the nation.

As the Jewish Harvest took place first, we shall begin our study of that Harvest. Now where is the source, or who is the source of our knowledge of the Harvest of the Jewish Age? It would be natural to think that primarily Jesus was the one who gave full information about the Jewish Age Harvest but surprisingly this is not so. Jesus said very little about a Harvest, and what he did say gave no idea that the Harvest would result in a separation of the Jewish nation into two classes—wheat and chaff, with the chaff suffering severe trouble.

It was John the Baptist, the Herald of Jesus, who announced that Jesus was the Harvester and that he would separate the nation into wheat, to be gathered into a garner, and into chaff which would be burned up in unquenchable fire. Let us study the words of John in Matt. 3:11, 12, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the

Holy Spirit and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” And he said further, in verse 10: “And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

Now, in contrast, note how mildly Jesus stated himself about a Harvest:—Matt. 9:35-38, “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

And in Luke 10:1-3 our Lord stated himself again, “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and set them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.”

And then John 4:34-38, “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest: behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.”

But it is from the words of John the Baptist that we learn of the seriousness of the work of Jesus in the Jewish Harvest—as John said, the time had come when the axe is laid unto the root of the trees—and every tree which brought not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.

The Lord had a large fan in his hand—his actions and his teachings were the fan and they were separating the Israelites—separating the chaff from the wheat. He spoke to the people in parables, and those who were attracted by the high standard and spirit of the Lord were specially dealt with. They had the parables explained to them and if they were so inclined they were given an opportunity to become the disciples of Jesus. As one of the Apostles said—“he came unto his own [his own nation], and to as many as received him, gave he power [or privilege] of becoming the sons of God.” These were the wheat and were gathered into the barn of the new spiritual dispensation. The rest were chaff

and they were baptized in the severe fire of their time of trouble, in 70 A.D. when Titus came against Jerusalem and destroyed it. At the very end of our Lord's ministry, he said to the nation, "your house is left unto you desolate."

When John the Baptist was baptizing the people, it was said that he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, and he said unto them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"—the wrath was their time of trouble that was coming upon the Jews—the climax taking place in the year 70 A.D. And he said further to these Pharisees and Sadducees, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Jesus used the same language when speaking to the Pharisees—Matt. 12:34, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

In Matt. 23:13-39 Jesus spoke these words: "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is debtor! Ye fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisees, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in

the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. 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 wing, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

The Pharisees and scribes were unwilling to accept the claims of Jesus, and they constantly sought to entrap him in every way they possibly could. When Jesus healed the man with the withered hand—on the Sabbath Day, the Pharisees held a council against him, how they might destroy him. (Matt. 12:10-14) And when Jesus cast out a devil enabling a dumb man to talk, the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out devils through the power of Satan. (Matt. 9:34) The scribes and Pharisees complained that the disciples of Jesus transgressed the traditions of the elders because they did not wash their hands when they ate bread. Jesus answered them by saying that the scribes and Pharisees transgressed the commandment of God by their tradition in not properly honoring their fathers and mothers—“Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:7-9)

On one occasion the disciples of Jesus came unto him and said, “Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” (Matt. 15:12-14) From these words of Jesus, it is evident that the people in general were blind and were being led by the blind Pharisees. This is evident when the Pharisees incited the people to clamor for the life of Jesus that he might be crucified.

Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables and his disciples came and asked him why he spoke in parables, and “He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given ... And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be

converted, and I should heal them.” (Matt. 13:2, 10, 11, 14, 15) Jesus did not mince words, “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:20)

On another occasion, “The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempted desiring him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them and departed.” (Matt. 16:1, 4) When Jesus had the disciples to himself he said “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”—he was warning the disciples against the false teachings of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. (Matt. 16:6, 12)

Over and over again the Sadducees and the Pharisees attempted to trap Jesus in his sayings, but Jesus always got the best of the argument, and finally in Matt. 22:46 we read “And no man was able to answer him a word neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.”

When our Lord cleansed a leper he instructed the leper to shew himself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. (Matt. 8:1-4) So in every way Jesus was putting a test upon the leaders of the Jewish people—by his miracles, by his teachings and by his manner and spirit. With few exceptions the response was one of intense opposition and hatred, and finally the leaders had Jesus taken into custody and brought before the Roman governors for trial and condemned to death upon the cross.

One is appalled by the hatred that was manifested toward Jesus. It was impossible to reform the leaders or the system under their control. So, as our Lord said, “No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottle, and be spilled and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles and both are preserved.” (Luke 5:36-38)

The final scene of the Harvester was a pitiful one—Jesus was hanging from the cross and “the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God.” (Matt. 27:41-43) The die had been cast, the nation was now on the way to complete destruction. Those who had brought about the death of the Harvester were now to be baptized with fire.

As we come to the consideration of the Harvest of the Gospel Age, we would naturally suppose that a great deal would be said about it by our Lord and the Apostles. Except for the book of Revelation, the Apostles never referred to the Harvest of the Gospel Age. But what about our Lord? Surely he must have talked about it a great deal.

But did he? No, he referred to it just once, in the parable of the wheat and the tares, Matt. 13:24-30 and 36-43. “Another parable put he forth unto them saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest 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. Then Jesus sent the multitudes away, and went into the house; and his disciples came unto him saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

This parable of our Lord informs us of the Lord’s method of dealing with his people during the Gospel Age. There is to be a mixture of wheat and tares all during the Gospel Age, and then at the end of the age there is to be a harvest—a separation of wheat and tares.

Why is this subject of more than common interest to us? Because we believe that we belong to this wheat class, and that we are actually in the end of the age—in the harvest time when the wheat is gathered into the heavenly garner, and when the tares are bundled for burning.

If there is to be a separation of wheat and tares in the harvest time, what would we expect to see that would accomplish a separation? The answer is that there would have to be a message of some kind—a message that would appeal to the heart-longings of the wheat class; a message of truth that would be superior to the religious teachings accepted by the

wheat class while living amongst the tares. The wheat class would not be aware that they should separate themselves unless something came along that was superior to what they were used to. They would see that this new message would be more true the Word of God, and they would compare it with their religious beliefs and conclude that they were not being fed, and that the Lord was indeed calling them to come out and enjoy the blessings of the true voice of the Lord. This message of Truth from the word of God would suggest ACTION—“come out of her my people.”

We all know what that message was and still is, and we have either “come out of her” or observed others coming out. There has indeed been a coming out and great has been the rejoicing on the part of those who heard the message and joined themselves to the Lord.

The harvest of the Gospel Age has two objects, the same as the harvest of the Jewish Age, viz. a gathering of an approved class, and the destruction of a disapproved class. In both harvests there is only a remnant, a small number that is approved of the Lord, and a large number that is discarded by the Lord as unfit for usefulness in his purposes. In the Jewish harvest these two classes are called wheat and chaff. In the Gospel Age harvest these two classes are called wheat and tares. In the Jewish harvest the wheat was gathered into the Gospel garner, and the chaff was consumed in the time of trouble upon the Jewish nation. In the Gospel harvest, the wheat is gathered into the heavenly garner, and the tares are consumed in the time of trouble upon Christendom—“a time of trouble such as never was upon the earth before, or ever shall be,” said our Lord.

In the 14th chapter of Revelation we have two very striking symbols that picture the two parts of the Gospel Age harvest. The first symbol shows the work of gathering the approved wheat. The second symbol shows the work of destroying the tares.

The first symbol is described in verses 14 to 16: “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”

The personage is described as like unto the Son of man and this could refer only to Christ himself. At the beginning of the book of Revelation, this Son of man is shown in symbol as in the midst of seven golden candlesticks—our Lord is in the midst of the seven churches all during the Gospel Age, directing and supervising all the affairs of the Christian church. And now in this 14th chapter of Revelation, this same Son of man is shown returning to earth as a reaper—he finishes the work that was started at the beginning of the Gospel Age, and he uses a sickle to gather his wheat into the heavenly garner.

What would be suggested by a “white cloud?”—the one like unto the Son of man is seated upon a “white cloud.” We know clouds and darkness accompany our Lord’s judgment of the nations—the nations are in deep trouble because of having transgressed the laws of righteousness for so many centuries. But this cloud upon which the Son of man is seated is a “White cloud.” If the Lord is reaping his beloved wheat, he is actually doing a judging work—deciding who are his approved followers and rewarding them accordingly—the “white cloud” therefore would represent a favorable judgment in behalf of his people. Being “white” would not bring fear to the ones judged, but would bring great happiness and peace—“well done good and faithful servants, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord.”

On the head of the Son of man was a golden crown, symbolic of his divine nature and authority as the kingly Reaper. We have been able to see the outward evidences of a mighty harvest work that has been going on ever since our Lord returned in 1874. Babylon has fallen and the Lord’s people have been admonished to come out of her, as expressed in Rev. 18:2 and 4—“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen ... come out of her my people.”

Now we are in the end of the age and the wheat and the tares are to be separated. The message of the Harvest Truth has revealed so clearly the true character of Babylon, and the wheat class have a clear message enabling them to recognize Babylon’s true state, and come out of her. Understanding this clear message, the wheat are able to disengage themselves from all Babylonian connections and raise a great cry themselves in cooperation with our Lord—“Come out of her, my people.” Yes, our Lord has provided the Truth message, and his faithful wheat have entered wholeheartedly into the work of “thrusting in the sickle and reaping.” Those who have escaped the confusion of Babylon are able to cry out with understanding and zeal, “come out of her”—come and enjoy the pure truth from God’s Holy Word as contained in the wonderful Harvest message—enjoy and be blessed with the Truth that we have by the Lord’s grace.

But coming away from Babylon is not the end of the work with the wheat. No, it must be thoroughly refined and tested. How clearly evident has been this work also—the refining and testing of the professed wheat class. The truth is the sickle, and we can see that not all the wheat are turning out to be of the best quality—this work is going on, and some are being sifted out.

The other part of the harvest work is pictured in verses 17 to 20 in this 14th chapter. This is not a gathering of ripe wheat but a gathering of the clusters of the vine of the earth.

Our Heavenly Father planted a vine, a heavenly vine, and that vine was our Lord Jesus. From this vine branches are grown and these branches are the true followers of our Lord.

These branches bear fruit—the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, brotherly kindness

But the vine of the earth produces fruit of another kind—selfishness of all kinds, and this must be gathered and crushed; and there will be much distress— “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The destruction will be thorough and complete, and a striking symbol is used to indicate this fact—“And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” (Rev. 14:20)

It is of course, an interesting question as to what place or condition is meant by the expression that “the winepress was trodden without the city.” From our study of prophecy, we are led to believe that the final blast of the time of trouble will be in the land of Palestine. We know the judgment trouble will be upon Christendom and this could be the great city without which the winepress is trodden—this is the thought that is suggested in Vol. IV, pages 552 and 553. The land of Palestine is outside of the great city of Christendom, symbolized by the city of Babylon. It is in the land of Palestine that the last battle between truth and error will be fought, and we know that when Israel is hard pressed, even unto utter annihilation, that God will fight for his people as he did in days of old.

The Arabs have publicly stated that it is their vow to drive Israel into the Mediterranean Sea; but the Lord will intervene and those bands who come against Israel to destroy her, will themselves be destroyed by God’s intervention to save Israel from complete destruction. What a battle that will be, and how the chastened world will look in wonder at the deliverance of Israel.

The extent of the destruction of the enemies of truth and righteousness is indicated by the symbol “blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” Blood that comes up to the bridle of a horse, is a pretty deep pool of blood, in fact it would be a lake of blood. As to the 1,600 furlongs: a furlong is 220 yards or 1/8th of a mile—this would be 200 miles long; and as one has said Palestine is approximately this distance in length. Or if we took the 1,600 furlongs as representing the circumference of an area, this would be 400 furlongs as representing the circumference of an area—this would be 400 furlongs on a side or 50 miles to each of four sides—and this is approximately the area between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. These are only guesses of course, and each one will have to do his own reasoning on the subject.

Getting back to the consideration of the work of the separating of the wheat from the tares, and a similar work in the Jewish harvest of separating wheat from chaff, we note a definite similarity of the position of the Harvester. The Harvester (Jesus) takes his

position OUTSIDE of the nominal mass in both cases. We remember what he said in his day at the first advent, that he could not put new wine in old wineskins, nor could he put a new patch on an old garment. Jesus conducted his work completely outside the ranks of the scribes and Pharisees. And so with his work here in the end of the Gospel Age—he has used his chief minister OUTSIDE of the nominal Christian system, and the call has gone forth to “come out of her, my people.” Our Pastor did not join forces with any of the churches, or attempt to enlist their cooperation in the work of finding and separation of the wheat class. As in the Jewish harvest, the same principle applies here in the Gospel Age harvest—you simply cannot put new wine into old wineskins, nor put a new patch on an old garment. This work OUTSIDE of the nominal system is a very striking feature of the harvesting of the wheat class, in the end of the age.

Another interesting similarity is in time. Our Lord began his ministry of harvesting the wheat in the Jewish church when he was baptized at Jordan and then just before his death, he declared the Jewish house was “left desolate.” And so our Lord, at his second advent, began the harvesting of the wheat when he returned in 1874 and in 1878, according to our Pastor’s declaration in Vol. III, page 93, arrangements were made for the starting of Zion’s Watch Tower—Babylon was no longer to be used as a mouthpiece of the Lord to give us our meat in due season. There Babylon was spewed out of the mouth of the Lord because it was lukewarm—“neither hot nor cold.”

Incidentally we think it is important to understand that the falling of Babylon from God’s favor is not the same as the destruction of Babylon—“casting into the midst of the sea” and “shall be found no more at all.” (Rev. 18:21) The fall of Babylon means that Babylon is no longer a MOUTHPIECE of the Lord to feed the sheep; and we find this fulfilled in the Pastor’s ministry outside of Babylon’s precincts and influence. “Casting into the midst of the sea” is something different altogether—it means Babylon’s literal destruction as a religious organization, when she “shall be found no more.” And this is to be accomplished by the restless masses of anarchy. This is still future we think. The head of Babylon, the Pope, is traveling all over the world and you could not correctly say that the expression “shall be found no more” would apply to him, nor to the great organization he represents.

The work of the Millennial Age is covered in the parable of the sheep and the goats. This parable is found in Matt. 25:31 to 46. The fulfillment of the parable starts when the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him—his body members. Our Lord will sit upon the throne of his glory. This will be the great white throne pictured in Rev. 20:11. This throne is pictured as white because it will represent a glorious rule of purity and righteousness. Before the throne of glory will be gathered all nations.

The basis of judgment at this time is shown in the parable as having to do with the spirit of kindness or lack of kindness that will be shown by the individuals of mankind when

they are brought back from their sleep of death—“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.” And the righteous will ask the King, “when did we do any of these things?” “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Jesus was referring of course to all those who will be brought back from the tomb, and the approved will be those who will take an unselfish interest in those brought back and will do things for them.

As to how Jesus reasoned in the matter is shown in Matt. 12:46 to 50: “While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

So when mankind are brought back in the Millennial Age and they do things for one another in an unselfish spirit, they will be doing the will of the Heavenly Father, and Jesus classes such as his brethren. All during the Millennial Age, there will be the various generations brought back from the tomb and there will be abundant opportunity then for men and women to show what kind of a spirit they have—whether they are selfishly enjoying the blessings of restitution and showing no interest in the living or any interest in having the dead returned to this earth; or whether, on the other hand, they are enjoying the opportunity of doing things for those brought back from the tomb, and also interested in having others brought back from death to share in the blessings of the Millennial Kingdom as it will be operating at that time.

Then there will be opportunity to feed those who are hungry for the bread of heaven and thirsty for the water of truth. There will be opportunity then for introducing those who are awakened from death to those who have already been awakened and make them feel welcome and wanted. There will be opportunity then to clothe the naked with the garments of praise and to assist the morally sick to receive healing and to make progress in the growth of character. There will be opportunity then for making petition for those who are still in the prison-house of death, and wish them back, and then have a joyful welcome ready when such are finally delivered from the prison house.

And these same conditions will test the unworthy—for such will not be interested in doing what they can for the living, and neither will such care whether the dead are brought back from the prison house. And so Jesus will say to such, “I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye

took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.”

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand [the sheep class] Come blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;” and to the goat class he will say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Incidentally, I would like to say that I think it is possible for some minds to picture the Millennial Age of Restitution as a time when man can relax and thoroughly enjoy “life, health, peace, happiness, security,” and be unconcerned about others around them. This parable we have just considered pictures the Millennial Age conditions altogether different. Those who merely selfishly enjoy the blessings at the time and take no interest in the welfare of others around them, or in the welfare of those who are still in the prison house of death, are not going to receive the smile of approval of the Mediator. Rather they will be frowned upon severely until such time as they catch the point that they have a work to do on their characters.

The absolute and final test upon mankind is pictured to us in Rev. 20:7-10, “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” The final test will not be as to the perfection of human nature, but as to their loyalty to God.

During the Millennial reign of Christ, mankind will have a Mediator and will be in a household of protection so to speak. All influences are restrained to give mankind a favorable opportunity for coming to a full knowledge of the divine requirements. At the end of the Millennial Age mankind will be turned over to the Father and will be tested to see if they are completely loyal at heart. Those who have served merely as a wise policy will be exposed for what they really are at heart. The test will not be to determine whether they prefer right to wrong, but as to whether they are entirely loyal to the Heavenly Father. (R4881-2)

It would appear to me that the test would be a matter of gratitude, for if one is truly grateful, he will surely be loyal. The Pastor suggested that it is “possible the temptation that will come to mankind will be the desire to take possession of the government of earth before it is fully turned over to them.” Some, in their lack of gratitude, may become restless and want to take the government out of the hands of the Ancient Worthies before God’s time. The loyal ones will leave this matter in God’s hands and thus will

demonstrate their entire loyalty to God. (R4882)

As to the tormenting for ever and ever, we must consider the fact that we have a plain statement of Scripture as to the fate of the wicked. Psalm 145:20 reads, "The Lord preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy." Another plain statement is Heb. 2:14, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." The tormenting of the devil as worded in Rev. 20:10 is understood to mean that the devil will experience a time of trouble that will complete his destruction.

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As nothing truly valuable can be attained without industry, so there can be no persevering industry without a deep sense of the value of time.—Mrs. Sigourney. Know the true value of time; snatch, seize, and enjoy every moment of it. No idleness, no laziness, no procrastination; never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.—Earl of Chesterfield. To choose time is to save time.—Bacon. Time is itself an element.—Goethe. As every thread of gold is valuable, so is every minute of time.—Mason. Stones are hollowed out by the constant dropping of water.—Ovid.