

## “THE HARVEST—END OF THE AGE—HARVESTERS”

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*“The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels” (messengers of the Son of man), Matt. 13:39-41.*

Evidently these are critical hours for the church as well as for the republic. Greed is breaking the pillars of the republic—is gnawing at the nation’s life. Of late some of our wisest statesmen and jurists have expressed alarm as to this future of our institutions. Ten thousand murders in one year, the revelation of graft and corruption, the increase of lawlessness, the breaking down of the family relation have stirred the note of alarm. Luke 21:26, “Men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking after the things coming upon the earth.”

It is our thought the church—members of the body of Christ—do not at all understand the importance, the dignity and the responsibility of the position they occupy as the *“messengers of the Son of man.”* Nor do they appreciate *his love and respect for them—* nor the *jealous care* with which they are being *guarded, directed and sustained—* nor the *certainty* of the *fulfillment* of the *message they are bearing to the world.*

The object of this lecture is to impress these thoughts and to show how *they are, “in authority now,”* in the *most tremendous sense—* not that kings are being bound with chains and vengeance is being executed at their command by a band of armed soldiers, but *much more wonderfully and actually* in the *fulfillment of the message they have been bearing to the world for the past forty years* as the *“messengers of the Son of man.”*

The commander in chief of the armies—one section in this side, the other division on the other side—whom they are following, and who is represented as mounted on a white horse, is seeing to it that their voice is being obeyed—by the *fulfillment of their message.* This is according to Bible customs, to thus speak. Jesus made all things in Heaven and Earth, *only as a Messenger of Jehovah—* Jesus spoke of the disciples feeding the 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes—*“you feed them”*—they *were doing this only as His messengers.* John 17:18, “as thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world.”

Our Lord Himself represented the work being done during the “gospel age,” as a *sowing and harvesting.* Sowing implies also plowing and cultivating—this has been going on during this entire gospel age. Thus arranging for the harvest at the end of the age—the in-gathering of a sufficient number to complete the glorified church. Harvesting implies binding, threshing, winnowing, separating. This is done by “harvesters.” These harvesters are termed “angels” in our text—*“messengers of the Son of man.”* They represent *Him* in the bearing of a message of truth—the sickle.

The things being foretold by these messengers are *to be actually fulfilled*. This is the way they are to “execute vengeance, bind kings to execute upon them the judgment written” and upon the world generally. The double edge sword is the truth—the message they are bearing. This message today in its force and power and scope is represented in the great motor driven reaping and binding machines of the great wheat plains of the west. *The whole of Christendom today is wavering beneath the weight of mighty forces—all of which is a fulfillment of the message of these harvesters which has been borne to the world for the past forty years.*

Our Lord Himself explains it in Matt. 13:37-43. *We are in the Harvest time.* The work is *nearing completion*. Those only may doubt who will shut their eyes and close their ears. Those who will reason, or look, or listen or who have already investigated *cannot doubt*. Those sitting on the walls of national governments noting the trend of national events can easily see the coming down of the present order of things. The most entrancing thought in this whole universe is the approaching kingdom of God. All other things dwindle into insignificance by comparison.

Doubt shows degeneracy. Some people cannot believe in anything or any person. *Satan* is the father of doubt. The doubt family is a huge one. Doubt closes our eyes and ears and causes us to drift. But after all our *doubting*, we must acknowledge the *fact of living is a tremendous fact*—so also is failure and success, gain and loss, salvation and sin. We cannot get away from the truth that a resistless tide is carrying us forward somewhere—to some goal—and that it is wiser and better to listen to the reason of the Lord’s word and to follow the light of His guidance. God’s message is of incalculable value. It has been belittled, mis-stated, distorted and obscured. It has been made to serve the forces of tyranny ignorance and superstition, but to you who have caught the true spirit of it, it has proven a herald of hope, an apostle of healing.

Again you cannot doubt but that the rehabilitation of Jerusalem is a tremendous fact, showing the end of the age, in fulfillment of God’s edict—Luke 21:24—“Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the ‘*Times of the Gentiles*’ be fulfilled.” Jerusalem today is a flourishing city. Very strange thing this. We cannot get away from this fact. This is one of the most far-reaching statements *in the Word of God*.

The increased facilities of transportation and travel, and the increase of knowledge are tremendous facts foretelling the end of the age, in fulfillment of God’s Word. We cannot get away from it. It is a marvelous thing to those who will think. Dan. 12:4: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the Book, to *the time of the end*.” “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” When we stop to consider that all the conveniences we so much appreciate have come within the ordinary life-time and that now all international boundaries are being wiped out by airships, locomotives, electric and motor machines and cars—that the whole world has become neighbors—then *it is*

*indeed wonderful.* The upheaval in the world today, financial, social, ecclesiastical and political, is a tremendous fact. We cannot get away from it. It extends from Peru to China. *All these things are in exact line with our expectations as an understanding of God's message*—which we have been bearing to the world for forty years.

1913 has come and gone—it's only a memory. It passed out with its clothing all patched with graft, crime, financial failure and political revolutions. It passed out at the point of the bayonet and the cannon—revolution everywhere threatening. That 1914 is to be one of the most important in the world's history cannot be doubted, and is so prophesied by the worldly wise. [Comment: Bro. Sullivan's discourse was given before World War I had started.] Here the suffering of Christ is to reach a climax and soon will end—here God's plans for the future welfare of His creatures will reach a culmination. We see many beacon lights for 1914. But they all point to the one great light of the world—the presence of our returned Lord. It is the *presence* and power in the world in *fulfillment of our message, causing this revolution—this upheaval.*

We note on every hand that ancestral worship is being destroyed—the dead corpse of denominationalism is being set up stiff in a corner and the whole world is breathing upon it, trying to make it breathe. “Go to church” is a nation-wide movement. We note politics is being purified—that there is an enlargement of conscience and quickening of personal conscience—we see the day approaching when there will be a better relationship between men—we see every one is trying to teach every other one how to live, how to avoid accident—“safety first.” We understand all these things indicate that we are living in a new era—they are *the result of the power and presence of our returned Lord, and in fulfillment of His message being borne by His people to the world for the past forty years—it means the message is true—“judgment is being executed” in fulfillment of this harvest message.* It means Satan's influence in the world is rapidly giving way—things are being rushed—our hopes are to be realized—God's kingdom is about to be established in *fulfillment of the message of these “Harvesters of the Son of man.”*

But some one answers: Oh, Bro. Sullivan, if I only knew it was true, if I only knew. Matt. 21:21, 22, “If ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall say unto this mountain [Satan's kingdom], be thou removed, and it shall be done.” “And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” How could you believe you would receive it unless you knew it was God's will to give it to you? But you answer: I know it is His will to give me this, for this is the first thing He has taught me to pray for; saying “when ye pray, say let *Thy kingdom come* and *Thy will* be done in earth as in Heaven.” So this is the thing we have been praying for, expecting, teaching and *now the fulfillment of our message is so wonderful we can scarcely be made to believe it ourselves.* The thought I get from these words is that this is being done in answer to our prayers and in fulfillment of our expectations—because we really believe it will be done. A wavering of faith here now will undoubtedly prove fatal to any one of us. [Comment: judging from the tenor of

Brother Sullivan's discourse, as a whole, we think the proper thought is that we are witnessing to the truth concerning the prophecies pertaining to our day, and we pray in harmony with these prophecies, and have confident faith that all will be fulfilled—because our prayers are *in harmony* with the prophecies, they, our prayers, will be fulfilled.]

It seems to me it is the most absurd thing for us to doubt or hesitate now seeing it is *God's power, in fulfillment of our message accomplishing these very things*. God is good, faithful, mindful of us. Let us more and more try to comprehend His love and respect for us and doubt not. Suppose Jesus had thus hesitated and doubted? Would He not have hindered and destroyed the Father's work? [Comment: Jesus was sent to accomplish a certain work. If he had doubted and hesitated, this work would not have been done. Hence the Father's work would have been "destroyed." We think this must have been the idea that Brother Sullivan had in mind.] Did he not have as much or more reason to doubt then as we? Did not His work seem much smaller than ours? Brethren, do you understand this is one of the most tremendous religious movements that has ever existed in the world? Some of us, who may doubt, will fail, but *it will never fail*.

But some one answers, I have done so very little even in comparison with the ancient worthies—I am not worthy of any such consideration at the hands of the Lord. Yes, all that may be true as regards ourselves, but you have stood for this work, and will continue to do so, you have supported it with your means; and besides, we must remember Jesus, whom we represent, is eminently worthy, and it is through Him, faith in Him, doubting not that constitutes our acceptance—He will bring it all to pass. It is only our sanctification—development through trying scenes desired—full trust in Him—doubting not.

Every minute is intensely interesting to us now and will be to the very end. Permit no feeling of fear or distrust to enter. *Remember Satan can't eat us*. If he has horns and hoofs, as he has been represented, then he is a vegetarian. The important thing for the Lord's people is to understand and know Him—then keep their courage—throw off fear, and realize the believer is never beaten. Let us look at our troubles calmly, fearlessly, intelligently, honestly, then remember: He who is on our side is greater than all. There's only one thing that can eat us—*it is doubt*. Let us do our work, keep at it, with courage and self-control, trusting in the Lord, and all the devils on earth can't eat us.

We are told, Amos 9:13, that the time will come when the plowman shall overtake the reapers in this harvest work. My friends, we have actually reached that time. That is what all these national disturbances mean—it is but the rushing of the nations to the great battle of Armageddon, when this time of trouble (now on hand and *foretold*) shall prepare the world for the millennial seed sowing—during this time of great trouble the Lord will run the plowshare of truth in every direction throughout the world. These truths and privileges have lifted us up into a very large place as regards character development,

fellowship and blessings, as the “*Messengers of the Son of man*” during this “harvest time,” yet if we are not careful Satan *will blind our eyes to the importance and reality of this relationship—blind our eyes as to our being the actual representatives of the King in Glory—blind our eyes as to the importance of our real part in this work—blind our eyes as to its being a real fulfillment of our message—blind our eyes as to the Lord’s love and respect for us, and as to the jealous watchcare, overruling us, in the delivery of this message.* A proper appreciation of these things brings *responsibility, vital interest, blessings—the greatest honors.*

The Lord has never visited calamities upon the world without warning the world and informing His people—you cannot point to a single instance. *So the message must be borne—the warning must be given.* The understanding of this message is not of ourselves—it is of the Lord. If there is a doubt in the mind of any of you, but that there is another power other than man’s behind this work, I would like for you to answer this question: How do you account for the fact that Pastor Russell’s sermons are to-day being printed in approximately 2,000 newspapers, when Dewitt Talmage’s sermons were printed in only four hundred? Talmage was the world’s idol—the most popular preacher that ever lived. You must admit it is the Lord’s intention to leave the world without excuse. They can not plead ignorance for it is stuck under their nose when they pick up their newspaper, when they look into their mail box, and when they walk up town it is handed to them. Besides this *forcing of the truth is world-wide.* Where does the money come from? Well, that’s what makes them all mad. It is being furnished by these messengers of the Son of man.

Perhaps you remember the history of this entire matter—an understanding of Israel’s Tabernacle service is the key to the whole Bible. Pastor Russell was forced to acknowledge publicly he could not understand it, but after much thought, prayer and delay the understanding came all at once—he wrote it out immediately, and no one has ever been able to find any fault with it. All the books are an outgrowth of an understanding of “Tabernacle Shadows.”

*Dear friends, its fulfillment is sure.* There is just such a reaping, binding and threshing—harvesting—going on in the world as we have been foretelling. *Brethren, it is true. Do you believe it?* “Heaven and earth [the present social system—ecclesiastical and civil powers] shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.” (Luke 21:33) Then follows a warning to those members living at this time: “*Take heed to yourselves*”—he is showing this to be an individual test—lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:34-36) The times will be so deceptive as to deceive the natural man. Only those counted worthy, as regards *heart preparation will be able to stand.* God is more jealous of His

Word than any other thing. You know the truth people are honest—they have not been dealing deceptively with God’s Word. Would the Lord permit us to go wrong? No, emphatically, no.

But some one answers: Bro. Russell in May 1st *Watch Tower* expresses doubt himself. *No he does not respecting* the close of the Gentile Times, but only as to *fulfillment of all our hopes at that time*. Those articles are only the throbbings of a father’s heart to his beloved to not expect “*too much*.” *Undoubtedly, the Lord’s intention is to throw each of us now on our own resources of faith and character development.*

### **Watch Tower Articles**

Let us briefly notice those articles: They prove conclusively that the Satan is being bound—kings are being fettered—they know it, and acknowledge it, and that *our hopes are being fulfilled*.

1. They begin with a quotation from the Duke of Bedford, showing how the self-made constitutional safeguards are being swept away, and that civil war is the only result.
2. They show the application of the “Golden Rule”—the rule of the Lord that has been misapplied—is now being applied. By whom? *The Lord himself in fulfillment of the teachings of those harvesters—“messengers of the Son of man.”* They show they are not voluntarily surrendering these special privileges with which they have surrounded themselves, but they are being taken back forcibly. *The people taking back their rights is the way the kings are being bound.*
3. They show it is but the nations hurrying to Armageddon—they show it’s a fulfillment of our hopes as an understanding of the Bible. They say: “The Bible alone makes the situation clear”—indeed, this is just what the Bible points out to us—“The Kingdom will therefore soon be established.”
4. They show the waters of Euphrates are drying up. Support of the churches is being cut off. Then just read the press notices.

All these things are actually being done now—are they not being bound, fettered? Do they not acknowledge it? *What is doing this? It is the power of the Almighty—the activity of the saints on this side and on the other—in fulfillment of the message being borne by these harvesters. “The judgment” work is the fulfillment of their teachings and predictions as regards the world and Israel.*

Those articles state: “The *chronology still seems as strong as ever to the editor.*” “*He sees nothing to alter or amend.*” That we have been expecting too much they acknowledge, but adds: “This does not prove the chronology wrong, nor does it prove that the ‘Gentile Times’ do not end with this year.” Then they suggest: “It may be that the Gentile Times will end before the ecclesiastical oligarchy attains sacerdotal power.”

Undoubtedly this must be a fact. Some may say it is *the people taking back their rights and privileges, and not the Lord*. Well, why did they not take them back centuries ago?

Why now at the *very time we have been predicting*? It matters not, who the Lord may use; nor how the fulfillment of His Word may be accomplished—He always uses natural means, when possible. *It is the Lord's work and in fulfillment of His message being borne by these harvesters.*

Surely we have been expecting “*too much*,” but not in regard to the closing of the “*Gentile Times*.” But as respect the *glorification of the Church at that time and that the federation will reach its climax and fall by that date—these things will undoubtedly follow in rapid succession. We could no more get away from October, 1914, as the close of “Gentile Times”* (if we desired to do so, which we do not), than a dog could run away from his. But as to what will happen thereafter we can well wait and see. *There will be enough to keep us interested, we may rest assured.*

Nothing can convince the chronology is not of the Lord. But it was intended to cover these two points; *the closing of the Gentile Times and our Lord's return*—so as to prevent us being overtaken as a thief in the night. It was not intended to mark positively the dates of other things which will happen as a result, and which *is not necessary that we know*. Everything else is more or less speculative. They must follow soon, but the *exact date is not given because it is not best, nor necessary. It would prevent the exercise of faith. It is a wonderful chronology, and it has had as much or more influence in forwarding this work than any other one thing. The work accomplished by it is good—a great blessing. Would the Lord do evil—have us believe in error—that good might result?* Error curses, blights, destroys. *This has been a great blessing.*

There's nothing so purely a matter of faith as the chronology. It is quite different from the “*Abrahamic promise*.” That is an *axiomatic proposition*. In believing *these facts and figures and giving expression thereto is not expressing a wish, but giving expression to faith*. This chronology is to play a still more important part in this harvest now than it has done in the past. Look how it is bolstered up by charts, lecture books, the Pyramid—look how much money and time and care have been bestowed upon it. Look how it is interwoven and inter-locked with numerous prophecies, and these prophecies are interwoven and inter-locked with other prophecies and fulfillments not dependent upon the chronology. There is *nothing more vital* than this point in chronology. Did God intend to give us a chronology? Was it to cover many points? or these two points only?—closing of the *Gentile Times* and our *Lord's return*.

Let any living man show from the Book, or from our present surrounding that this understanding is wrong—just one reasonable, feasible argument. It makes no particular difference how long thereafter it may be before the glorification of the Church may occur, or the present social fabric—heavens and earth will continue. For it is my thought they will both go together. 2 Peter 3:10: “*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*”

This whole social fabric is inter-woven—the church and state are one—when one goes the other must go also.

A doubt injected here upon this point will cause a fearful loss of life. We are now entering upon the fiercest of this faith battle, and I would be willing to tear my own body to threads to clear away any trouble to faith—any barbed wire fence of doubt—unless these are cleared away there will be a fearful mortality here from a spiritual standpoint.

It will not do to be governed entirely by the signs of the times—though these are speaking to-day in thunderous tones—yet these are intended to be more or less deceptive. We are not trying to cut a government from a certain piece of cloth that may be too short and that needs to be starched—no—but only as honest surveyors of God’s properties, we are trying to run a few true lines from certain given points in our chart of the ages; and then to leave the result with Him. Someone is ready to say: Yes, God could make known His will to us—His times and seasons—if He desired to do so. But is it His desire to do this? We are not sure He intended to do such a thing. We answer: Well, there’s a difference—our faith is in God—we *have what He gave us—it is good—wholesome—a tremendous blessing—all of it.*

We accept “*Scripture Studies*” as a fulfillment of Luke 12:37: “Blessed are those servants whom when He cometh He shall find watching—He will come forth and serve them.” We note He *promises to make known His presence himself. So we are sure of His presence and the closing of the Gentile Times and that is enough. It is all of faith,* but the foundations are sure and strong, not mere sand. Each must decide for himself—but we expect to stand by our guns. *Why was not some such chronology given sooner? Because it was not needed. Today it is a necessity. How else are we to know?* and how is His promise to be fulfilled, that this day shall not overtake us as a thief in the night? 1 Thess. 5:4, “But ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day they should overtake thee as a thief.”

What reasons could be assigned by anyone, for abandoning the chronology now which has played such a tremendous part in working out good to us all? If it has been good to live with—will it not be good to stay with, and to die with? But someone answers: It looks like all we expected could not happen. Truly it cannot and is *not necessary. But how does this affect the chronology?* It was only to *prevent us being overtaken unawares by putting us on guard, by showing the “return of our Lord” and the close of the Gentile Times. That is ample data,* we can well trust the Lord for the remainder. *But that much knowledge was a necessity. All who abandon these two points will surely suffer loss and be caught asleep.* Brother Russell tells us plainly that chronology is as *strong as ever, that he sees no fault in it.* Dear friends, this whole fabric stands or falls together. If we are firm and settled on the *close of the Gentile Times, all is well. We can not sleep then, we must watch then, we must be sober then, and everything else will come on in “due time.”*

“Behold the Bridegroom: go ye out to meet Him.” (Matt. 25:6) Undoubtedly this parable in the first five verses represents the Miller movement in 1844. This second movement mentioned in the 6th verse represents the call of Present Truth in 1874, and we should not forget that He came this second time. This verse makes it clear also that only those who *behold Him*—know of His *second presence*, will make the *necessary heart preparations to meet Him*. This point settled also fixes the close of the Gentile Times, and that’s *all that is necessary to know*. We will delight to co-operate with our returned Lord, until He shall say “It is enough.”

Psalms 149:5-9: “Let the saints be joyful in Glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouths and a two-edged sword in their hand. To execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishment upon the peoples. To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron. To execute upon them the judgments written: This honor have all the saints.” Undoubtedly this means as the *Watch Tower* has explained, that the saints are using the two-edged sword this side the veil to clear the name of Jehovah from the dishonor attached to it through the superstitions and creeds of the dark ages, and also to bear a message of truth respecting the closing of the Gentile Times, and the presence of the Lord, and the establishment of His Kingdom.

Surely it *does not mean* the Church this side the veil is to be given *greater power than at present to “execute vengeance,”* but that the ages lap and that they are “in Glory” in the sense *that their voice is being heard in the fulfillment of the message they have been bearing—that the message is true and the things spoken by them are having a fulfillment. These very things are now really occurring.* Kings are being bound, they acknowledge it. It is a reaping work of this two-edged sword—executing the judgments written. “This honor have all the saints” may mean when this time comes that it can be seen and acknowledged that the fulfillment is sure. All the saints will have been selected and be busily engaged either on this side or on the other, and that to be a saint at this time and to be thus occupied will be a great honor—“*to be in Glory.*” *We should so consider it.*

Rev. 19:11, 14 evidently represents our triumphant Lord and His faithful and triumphant messengers, making preparations for the supper of the Great God, the battle of Armageddon.

What privileges these messengers do have are to be taken away soon—there will be a little season in which they will not be permitted to buy or sell—deal in the Truth.

The nations are hurrying to this battle of Armageddon and will reach it in plenty of time. To quote again from the *Watch Tower*: “Nobody wants the trouble, everybody will be injured by it, and yet everybody is rushing toward it. Now all this is to end suddenly—unexpectedly—‘as travail’—as unknown to the *mothers as others.*”

### **Apostatizing From the Living God**

In Heb. 3:12, the Apostle warns us, showing how the “natural Israelites,” in the type did apostatize after having every reason to become established. He says: “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [not of murder] by apostatizing from the living God.” None can apostatize from the living God except those who have become associated with Him in deed and truth—vitality. For living people to associate with living people and communicate with them is to become acquainted and confidence to become firmly fixed.

The building of such a character and fixing it firmly in an unseen Father and Savior is a tremendous work—accomplished only by a living God. This work must be carried on moment by moment—there should be the greatest consciousness of it, and as we realize its beauty and its reality; and as we appreciate its blessing we should more and more draw nigh to God—understand His love—and feel sure of the fulfillment of all His good promises. In Heb. 3:6, the Apostle explains the conditions upon which this character work can be completed with each of us: “Faithfulness, in holding fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

The inference is that the Lord will test this character work as it proceeds. *Every day should further strengthen our confidence in the Lord's ability, faithfulness and love and should increase our rejoicing* as we observe the beauty of the work accomplished; and as we are brought nearer ultimate perfection should lessen the danger of apostatizing. But, strange to say, some forget easily—they fail to appreciate the exquisite pleasure, joy and peace growing out of perfect submission and full confidence—they give way to the feeling of a desire to return to their former selves—they apostatize.

The Apostle cites natural Israel being brought out of Egypt (which was typical) in Heb. 3:7-11, to show many did apostatize, then in Heb. 3:12 warns us—the spiritual Israelites, saying: “*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, disbelieving heart in apostatizing from the living God.*” They were the type, we are the anti-type. There was no excuse for their foolish disbelief—so there is none for ours. They proved God and saw His works during that forty-year trial day in the wilderness. But the great majority were so defective in their hearts that they could not be prepared for their Canaan inheritance. The Lord had to raise up another generation. *How foolish, how hateful, is unbelief.* Think of the marvelous manner in which God brought them out of the slavery of Egypt. It required a living God—a powerful God to do this.

### **A Living God**

It required a living God to perform those miracles and wonders in Egypt which made Pharaoh—the typical Satan—willing to let them go. It required a living God to bring them across the Red sea—to perform those sublime scenes at Mt. Sinai—to make the water flow out of the rock—to feed them thirty-nine years in the wilderness on manna—to send the quail into their camp. They had every proof of His power, His love and His

watchcare. They had the pillar of cloud hovering over them day by day, and the pillar of fire by night. They had the supernatural light shining out from between those cherubs, all these things indicating the Divine presence and watchcare. The Lord had given them victory over their enemies in the most wonderful and miraculous manner. *Now how could they doubt God's power? God's motive? or God's Wisdom?*

O, you answer, how foolish! how could they? No wonder the Lord was displeased with them! Even so, but with us it is a *great deal worse*. Disbelieving God's word—distrusting His motive—unwillingness to rely on His wisdom and love after He has manifested himself to us is the most displeasing of all things to Him. It will prove us to be so degenerate as to prove us unfit for further favor. We think of them as being foolish, but it is a much more foolish, skeptical and hurtful thing for us now, than for them at that time. For we have so *much more proof of God's love, power and wisdom than they had*. Besides, we have the *new mind*—the new heart—which can understand and appreciate spiritual things.

*Brethren, is our God a living God or a dead thing?* “For a living dog is better than a dead lion,” (Eccl. 9:4) Brethren, it requires a living God to bring us out of the antitypical Egypt—to take us out of Satan's hands (the antitypical Pharaoh's hands)—spare us alone during this dark passover night (though surrounded by snares and pitfalls)—to make the water flow out of this rock—(Christ)—feed us upon the hidden manna of His love and truth—bring us through this wilderness of sin—and create within us this new heart. Brethren, surely you can not doubt that such an one is a “*living God*”—nor but that He loves you—nor but that He will *fulfill all His good promises*.

Wherever the thought has taken hold that there may be some mistake in regard to the closing of the Gentile Times (and necessarily of our Lord's return) spiritual death and death are surely in progress. Unconsciously it undermines the foundations of this character superstructure. The reasons are evident: For this entire matter is of faith. If there is not sufficient proof upon that point to establish faith firmly, then it is impossible to establish anything from a purely faith standpoint, for the proof could not be more positive nor abundant.

In fact, this matter goes much deeper than is ordinarily considered, for it makes manifest our *own conceptions of God and His character*. What kind of a God do we suppose we have? Is He impotent or powerful? Is He vicious or loving? Is He faithful or deceptive? *The whole of our training now is to develop in us a heart capable of appreciating God and His character. Is God reliable? Is He able to make known His will? His plan? His times and seasons to us? Is He as good as we?* (For we would not deceive our own children nor permit it to be done if we could prevent it). Brethren, *to hesitate and doubt now, it is either to doubt God's reliability, His power or His love*.

Are we not taught to expect our faith in the Almighty God—our Heavenly Father—to be

thoroughly tried? What is life eternal? “To know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.” *Do we know Him if we can doubt His connection with this work? or the fulfillment of His promise?* This is the very point of our trial now. Where the proper thought and appreciation of God and His character prevails, the work booms.

### **“Take Heed”**

Let us “take heed” lest there be in any of us an “evil unbelieving” heart—it means we are apostatizing—*no doubter can say he knows God*. Let us “take heed.” “To exhort one another daily while it is called to-day. We owe much to one another to-day which *cannot be paid to-morrow*.” (Heb. 3:13) Let us “take heed” to keep in mind: “We are made partakers of Christ only if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” (Heb. 3:14) Let us “take heed” that we be not stiff-necked, that we listen to one another. Remember God is overruling in this matter and He gives the blessings we need for our perfecting through the fellow members of the body. (Eph. 4:11, 12) “He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and some teachers. For the perfecting of the saints for the work of service.” We must reach perfection of heart—of will—of trust—in the Lord, or we cannot get into the Kingdom. *It must be done now*. It is only those things which cannot be moved may remain. Heb. 12:27.