

the kingdom of heaven is at hand? All who answer truly must admit that there is but one small body of Christian people on earth, and that these are working harmoniously together to this end, and that there is none other so doing. The same class of Christians collectively are feeding each other upon the Word of God, and are diligently endeavoring to feed the prisoners who are also of the household of faith.

<sup>48</sup> There seems to be no ground, within the meaning of the Scriptures, for concluding that "the faithful and wise servant" refers to any individual person, but does have reference to the feet members of Christ on earth—those who are blind to everything except to the will of the Lord, and who are harmoniously lifting up their voices together in declaring his message of the kingdom.

#### EVIL SERVANT

<sup>49</sup> All who were begotten and anointed of the holy spirit and thereby in Christ constituted a part of The Servant class. The parable of the talents shows that some of That Servant class, when the Lord came to his temple, were found to be unfaithful; and to such the Lord said: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, . . . Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. . . . And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—Matt. 25: 26, 28, 30.

<sup>50</sup> Undoubtedly then the evil servant is made up of that part of the Servant class who were found unfaithful when the Lord came to his temple. "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—Matthew 24: 48-51.

<sup>51</sup> Call to mind now the facts, how that in the latter part of 1917, which was the beginning of 1918, there began to be a division amongst the Lord's people who claimed to be consecrated and in present truth. Some said, in substance if not in terms, "There is no more work to be done"; and they refused to do any more. They were not content with this, but went about saying all manner of evil against their fellow servants and smiting them; that is to say, those who had been fellow servants with them, and who still remained faithful to the Lord, were the objects of the assaults of the others, who had taken a different course.

<sup>52</sup> The "drunken" mentioned in the above text of necessity must be that class mentioned by the Apostle Paul as drunken on the false doctrines of this world. This evil servant class, many of them at least, began to sleep so far as the work was concerned; and a dark time was on the church. "For they that sleep, sleep in

the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night."—1 Thessalonians 5: 7.

<sup>53</sup> The facts show that the controversy and trouble and smiting began in 1917, before the Lord came to his temple. The words of the Master are: "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of." Those who turned away from present truth in 1917, and since, do not believe that the Lord has come to his temple; and they oppose those who have called attention to the fact of the Lord's coming to his temple. The evil servant clearly does not refer to an individual human being, but does refer collectively to those who were found unfaithful when the Lord arrived at his temple.

#### LIGHT FROM THE TEMPLE

<sup>54</sup> What is here said is no reflection on anything that has heretofore been written. Some have claimed that the scripture, "The faithful and wise servant," specifically applies to Brother Russell. He never made that claim himself. That Brother Russell was greatly used of the Lord no one can doubt who knew him. That the Lord used him more wonderfully than any one on earth since St. Paul's day there can be no doubt. But that does not at all affect the explanation of this scripture. It is clearly manifest from the scriptures hereinbefore cited that the elect Servant of God is Christ, Jesus the Head and his body members; and that Christ Jesus speaks of these faithful members as a part of himself.

<sup>55</sup> To say that "that faithful and wise servant" specifically applies to one individual and to none other would imply that a large proportion of the body members of Christ could not be classed either as faithful or wise. That would be doing violence to the scripture. It is only the wise and faithful that God has promised shall be preserved in this time of stress. "O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful."—Psalm 31: 23.

<sup>56</sup> In addition to this, the Lord has never promised to make one man the custodian of all of his interests on earth. All the kingdom interests are the Lord's; and when the division came at the temple judgment he said to the faithful members on earth: "To you I will commit the duty to guard the interests of my kingdom, and to look after my household under my supervision." This is both consistent and reasonable. This should be a great encouragement to every one who can now examine himself and see that he is faithful to the Lord and is diligently trying to serve him.

<sup>57</sup> The Lord is no respecter of persons. He judges us by our faithful devotion to him. All the members of the body of Christ now on earth are one, walking together as one, together harmoniously proclaiming the message of his kingdom, and collectively acting as his Servant and as his representative on earth as part of God's great elect Servant. If any Christian becomes unfaithful he withdraws himself from this favored Servant class.