Nineteen centuries ago, when the "faithful and discreet slave" class was first formed, it survived the turbulent period of time prophetically described by Jesus in Matthew 24:4-22, Mark 13:5-20 and Luke 21:8-24. More than twenty-five years after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E., the apostle John wrote the Revelation and the Gospel and the three letters of John, all of these being written for the benefit of the "faithful and discreet slave" class and for the feeding of the "domestics" of the heavenly Master. In the year 1914 C.E. the remnant of the "faithful and discreet slave" class entered into the time of the complete or final fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy on the "sign of [his] presence and of the conclusion of the system of things." The events that Jesus foretold to characterize the typical time period from 33 C.E. to 70 C.E. began occurring also in 1914 C.E. The question now arose as to whether the "faithful and discreet slave" class would survive the hard things that were due to occur to correspond with what befell the "slave" class between 33 and 70 C.E.

The end of the Gentile Times about October 4/5 of 1914 found World War I already in progress for more than two months. This was something new, not only for the world of mankind, but also for the Master's "slave" class. World War I far exceeded in violence and destructiveness the foretold "wars and reports of wars" and the rise of nation against nation and of kingdom against kingdom such as marked the years after Jesus' ascension to heaven in 33 C.E. (Matthew 24:6, 7) World War conditions and restrictions made it very difficult for the "faithful and discreet slave" class to continue on giving to the "domestics" of the heavenly Master "their food at the proper time." The situation worsened for them until finally many of the domestics were in prison or military encampments.

- Time of Inspection by the Slave's Master

Without a question of doubt, it was a real time for inspection of the Master's "slave" class. All the facts of the case argue that the Master came for the work of inspection at this time. Such a thing was to be expected according to the prophecy of Malachi 3:1-5. Of course, the sectarian churches of Christendom had made a wartime record for themselves, an open record that had a heavy bearing on their claim to be disciples and slaves of Jesus Christ. Could they, by even their latest record dated in 1919, prove that they themselves were the "composite "faithful and discreet slave" class of the heavenly Lord and Master, Jesus Christ? He as Judge would indicate what his findings were by the way he thereafter dealt with the hundreds of religious sects of Christendom. Appropriately, now our attention...
focuses upon those sincere, Bible-studying Christians who, during World War I, were persecuted for their obedience to Christ and who became "objects of hatred by all the nations" on account of Christ's name. Since they also came under divine inspection, what did the Master show to be his decision on them?

According to Jesus' illustration, how did the master who appointed the slave return to his house? Was it in great rage in order to destroy the house? Or was it to enjoy his homecoming and to see how things had been going on during his absence? His return to his house was a peaceful one. He did not come to engage in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon. (Revelation 16:13-16)

Rather, he wanted to make sure that his domestic affairs were in the right condition. Had his appointed slave done as he was assigned to do, namely, give to the "domestics" their "food at the proper time"? The master needed to make an inspection.

The serving of food, the right sort of food, at the proper time was the issue. It had to be according to this that a decision must be rendered by the returned master. Well, then, what about that body of Christians internationally hated and persecuted? (Matthew 24:9)

Down to 1919 C.E., they had endeavored to give "food at the proper time" to the "household of faith" or the "domestics" of the heavenly Master. They did this despite interference by persecutors and the warring nations. Not only was the regularity in serving the spiritual food a problem, but the quality of the food itself was to be considered. In this respect the body of hated, persecuted Christians, who always sought to be faithful slaves of Jesus Christ, met the test. During the years of the world conflict they had not joined Christendom or pagandom in preaching the war propaganda submitted by the political governments. They persisted in preaching the Bible message for the time and in advocating a Christian adherence to Bible principles for everybody.

What, then, did the heavenly Master decide regarding these obedient slaves of his? He was not influenced by their unpopular, persecuted position in the war-mad world, for he had foretold such a hard experience for them during his invisible parousia or "presence." Did he find that body of Christian slaves disregarding the unpopularity of the world and seeking to be pleasing to their Master by doing what he had appointed to be done during his absence? He must have found them so, according to the way the inspection, begun in 1919, has affected his decision since. His actions, his dealings with his Christian slaves, speak louder than words.

Let us reflect a moment on the case of Jesus' apostles. Three and a half years after being baptized in the Jordan River, Jesus Christ was betrayed in the garden of Gethsemane. He quoted from the prophecy of Zechariah 13:7 and foretold what would happen to his apostles, saying: "All of you will be scattered in connection with me on this night, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered about.' But after I have been raised up, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." (Matthew 26:31, 32) Jesus' application of Zechariah's prophecy to his apostles proved true on that same night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., for the account in Matthew 26:56 tells what occurred after Jesus' betrayal: "Then all the disciples abandoned him and fled." His "sheep" were indeed scattered.

In parallel fashion, three and a half years after the close of the Gentile Times and Christ's enthronement in the heavens in 1914 C.E., there came the annual celebration of the Lord's Supper on Tuesday, March 26, 1918. The scattering of the heavenly Shepherd's "sheep" was then nearing its climax, and The...

30. According to Jesus' parable, in what frame of mind did the master return home, and with what purpose in mind?

40. Since the serving of food regularly, and the right kind of food, was the issue on which to base a decision, what did the returned Master find concerning the persecuted, hated Christians?

41. When inspecting such Christians, by what was the Master not influenced, and how has his decision expressed itself since?

42. 43. (a) On the night of being betrayed, Jesus applied what prophecy to his apostles, and how was it fulfilled? (b) Three and a half years after Jesus' enthronement in 1914, how was the same prophecy of Zechariah 13:7 being fulfilled?