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The Day of Judgment.

Very confused notions are held by many as to the work of judgment in the future age. The popular idea on the subject being something like this:

The Father, robed as a judge, with silvery hair, and stern aspect, is seated on a great white throne. By his side stands the Saviour with loving eyes and pleading face. The world of mankind is marshalled before him. They come up in close ranks, and with down-cast faces toward the Judge. The very large majority are addressed by him in a voice of thunder, and ordered to depart toward the left. Trembling with despair they hurry away, and are at once seized by a guard of demons, and are swiftly dragged, shrieking with terror, down, down, down. In the advancing crowd, there comes now and then one, who is at once recognized by the Saviour as a true christian; introduced to the Father as such; who with modulated voice welcomes him to the right hand; where he is immediately crowned, and seated with the angels to view the remainder of the solemn scene. This separating work to continue until all who have ever lived have passed the tribunal; the whole period of time occupied being something less than 24 hours, thus constituting "the day of judgment."

While some features of this picture are drawn from symbolic Bible imagery, the conception as a whole is very far from being a scriptural one. As to the gathering of the world before the Judge in a kind of military review, and the immediate separation of the classes, while it is the likeness in the figure, it is of necessity as far from the real, as a type is from its antitype.

THREE GREAT PERIODS OF SEPARATION

are, we think, clearly revealed in God's word: "The separation of the chaff from the wheat." Matt. 3:10,12; "the tares from the wheat." Matt. 13:37,43; "and the sheep from the goats." Matt. 25:32.

The first separation is in the past. Jesus himself, while on earth, thoroughly purged the floor of the Jewish house, gathered the wheat into the Gospel church, and cast the chaff into a fire, which, culminating at the destruction of Jerusalem, burns even yet against the Jew. So far from marshalling that nation in rank and file before him, they were not even aware of the test then made, and were condemned because they knew not the day of their visitation.

The second great separation was due to take place at the end of this aionos [age] i.e., closing period of the Gospel dispensation. This work has actually been going on in our midst, and the world and worldly church know nothing of it. So in the last great harvest in the age of judgment, God's truth, the two-edged sword, will quietly, but surely, do the dividing work; and that Word not spoken but written, will plainly manifest the sheep and the goats.

THE TERM "DAY"

in Bible times was frequently used, as now, to cover a long but definite period; as, for instance: "The day" in which "Jehovah God made the earth and the heavens." Gen. 2:4. "The day of the temptation in the wilderness." Heb. 3:8. [40 years]. "The day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6:2. [Gospel dispensation].

As to the period comprised in "the day of judgment," if the student will but faithfully use a reference Bible or a concordance, and find the amount and kind of work to be accomplished "in that day," he will soon be glad to accept of Peter's explanation of it, that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years;" and believing the Revelation of Jesus Christ, rejoice in the promise there given, to "reign with him a thousand years." As to

THE KIND OF JUDGING

which is to be carried on, we must consult the Word if we would get the truth. Turn to the book of "Judges," and we find that after the death of Joshua, the Israelites forsook Jehovah, and worshipped Baal. To bring them to their senses, their enemies were allowed to triumph over them. When they repented, "Jehovah raised up judges; who delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them." For instance, "When the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, Jehovah raised up a deliverer Othniel. And the spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war, and prevailed, and the land had rest for forty years,"* until Othniel died. Thus it continued through the period of the Judges until Samuel, who "judged Israel all the days of his life." When Samuel had grown old, the Elders of Israel asked him for "a King to judge us like all the nations." 1 Sam. 8:5,20.

A judge, then, in those days, was a person eagerly sought after; a ruler to be desired; who would deliver his people from oppression, administer justice to the wronged, and bring peace and joy to those over whom he exercised authority.

The world, and even the church, at the present time, led astray by an unscriptural theology, puts far away the idea of Christ's presence to judge [rule] the world, as something to be dreaded by all. Not so the Heaven inspired prophets of old. To them it was the one grand and glorious epoch for which, as Paul said, "creation groaneth." Listen to David and the sweet singers of Israel, in the first psalm sung, by the first divinely appointed choir, at the home-bringing of the ark.

Let the heavens be glad,
And let the earth rejoice:
And let men say among the nations,
Jehovah reigneth.

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof:
Let the fields rejoice, and all that are therein.
Then shall the trees of the wood sing aloud
At the PRESENCE of JEHOVAH,
BECAUSE HE COMETH
TO JUDGE THE EARTH.
O give thanks unto Jehovah,
For he is good,
FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER.

We might multiply quotations like the above, but they ought to be familiar to the faithful student of the Word.

WHY

did "all the holy prophets since the world began" long for "that day" when the anointed should be present to rule, to reign, to judge?

WHY

does all christendom of this age shrink at the bare mention of that day?

IN "THE DAY OF THE LORD,"

as in the days of creation, there is an evening and a morning. So the Jews kept their time: beginning their day with evening. It is God's order. First the cross, then the crown. The night was forty years long to the children of Israel. To the Gospel church it has been many centuries. So the nations in the coming age must first run the race before they receive the prize. They have not been on the race course – the narrow way – yet. And during their trial, as in ours, there must be "weeping for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

Many, who have failed to "search the scriptures" as commanded, have seen only this night of darkness; and it has hung before them like a funeral pall, cutting off the light of the glory beyond.

A DARK NIGHT

is indeed closing over a sleeping church, and a blind world; during which many woes will be poured out upon them. But when they have well learned the lesson of obedience through suffering, as all past overcomers have, they will reap the blessed reward.

The day of Judgment, then, divides itself into two parts. First, a "time of trouble" during which the nations will be subdued, and humbled, and taught the lesson of Nebuchadnezzar their type, "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Secondly, a morning, in which the Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings; driving away the mists of ignorance and superstition; destroying the miasma of sin; and bringing light, and life, and love, to the downtrodden sons of men. During **[R35 : page 8]** the first named period, such scriptures as the following have a fulfillment:

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. [Symbolical of a spiritual night.] And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." Isa. 13:9,11. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potters vessel." Psa. 2:8,9.

"The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted...come, behold the works of Jehovah, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." Psa. 46:6,10. How does he make wars to cease? Evidently by the "desolations" above mentioned. The nations will be so satiated with bloodshed; and by bitter experience will so realize the misery of injustice, and oppression, and sin, that they will loathe themselves and their ways, and will willingly turn and seek for purity and peace. But to produce this effect the command will first go forth: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come forth:

BEAT YOUR PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS,

and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong." Joel 3:9,10. The dreadful lesson of the exceeding sinfulness of sin will be learned in time, and well learned, for, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Psa. 110:3. Then, after they have been brought to a condition of willingness to let "this man reign over" them, we find as a result of his judgship, they shall

BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES,

and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isa. 2:4.

The preceding verses tell us when this blessed time will come, and also other events in this glorious day of Christ's presence, as Judge over all the earth. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain [government or kingdom] of the LORD'S house [Temple: which Temple ye are. 1 Cor. 3:17.] shall be in the top of the mountains [great kingdoms of earth], and shall be exalted above the hills [lessor

kingdoms]; 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 Jehovah, 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 [the glorified Temple] shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem [restored earthly Jerusalem and her priesthood. 33:20,21]. We are now prepared to read the 97th Psalm, which we will quote.

"JEHOVAH REIGNETH:

Let the earth rejoice; let the multitude
of isles be glad.
Clouds and darkness are round about him:
Righteousness and judgment [justice]
the establishment of his throne.
A fire goeth before him,
And burneth up his enemies round about,
His lightnings [truth] enlighteneth the world:
The earth [nations] saw and trembled.
The hills [earthly governments] melted
like wax at the presence of Jehovah.
At the presence of the LORD of the whole earth.
The Heavens [immortalized saints in
heavenly places] declare his righteousness,
and all the people see his glory.
Zion heard and was glad:
And the daughters of Judah rejoiced,
Because of thy JUDGMENTS, O Jehovah.

In view of the glorious prospect before the church and the world, can we not join the prophet in the closing words of this psalm.

Light is sown for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart.

Rejoice in Jehovah, ye righteous; and
give thanks at the remembrance
of his holiness.

W. J. M.

[CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.]

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