

## **THE CLOSING WORK.**

### **No. 2.**

In the closing work of the Jewish and Gospel ages, there are three things mentioned as belonging to either, viz: Separation, gathering and burning. In the former dispensation they were represented under the figures of wheat and chaff, and in the nominal gospel church are called wheat and tares; but the disposition of the two are parallel. The two elements are separated – the wheat gathered into the barn, and the chaff and tares are burned.

Not only the work of separation and the gathering of the wheat are under the supervision of Christ, but also the burning of the chaff and tares. This fact shows that all that is meant by the burning is included in the harvest, and, therefore, in the end of the age; for "the harvest is the end of the age," whether it be the Jewish or the Gospel age.

John's statement in reference to the closing work of Christ is clear on this point: "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." – Matt. 3:12. In the seventh verse the fire is called the "wrath to come." That this meant the fire (or judgment) which was to bring the Jewish people to desolation, is evident from the Savior's own prophecy: "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things that are written may be fulfilled;...for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people." – Luke 21:22,23. Paul, in referring to the same people and the same facts, says: "Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets,...for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." – 1 Thess. 2:15,16.

These statements compared show clearly that the closing work included the day of wrath, and reached to the destruction of Jerusalem. Hence, we cannot escape the conclusion, that there is a sense in which the Jewish age, and, therefore, its harvest or closing work, reached to the destruction of Jerusalem. This being true, the Jewish harvest, for the complete disposition of the Jewish church, instead of being limited to three and a half or seven years, covered the forty years from the Spring after his baptism, to A.D. 70.

This may show us that Christ has the supervision and power over the natural men and nations, as well as over spiritual things, for the overthrow of Jerusalem was of a very natural people in a very natural way; and yet it was in fulfillment **[R115 : page 4]** of the statement: "He will burn up the chaff with fire unquenchable." There is a parallel to this, and without a contrast, in the disposal of the tares of the nominal Gospel church – a very natural set of people.

That the burning of the tares is included in the gospel harvest, is evident from Matt. 13:40: "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this age." So shall it be in the harvest, for "the harvest is the end of this age" (ver. 39). From these statements, the parallels, and other scriptures, we conclude that the day of wrath is included in the Gospel harvest, and, therefore, that the age and harvest extend to 1914, covering a space of forty years from the Spring of 1875, instead of three years and a-half, or seven years.

The prophecies of Isaiah call for such an extension as to include the "day of vengeance" in the closing ministry of Christ. Isa. 61:2 and **[R116 : page 4]** 63:4. It is evident from the latter reference, that the "day of vengeance" is also "the year of my redeemed."

This carries us forward to Rev. 11:15-18 to find the same thought of the time of "reward" of all that fear God's name, being identical with the day of wrath. The seventh trumpet includes both

and reaches to 1914. Whoever will read carefully the first few verses of Isaiah 63 and the description of the harvest as given in Revelation 14 can hardly fail to see that the scenes are identical. That harvest is under the supervision of the Son of man, with a golden crown upon His head. Then the idea we advance that Christ entered upon the official work of King in 1878 is in harmony with the application of the harvest here given.

But what becomes of the idea of those who now oppose us in these things, that Christ does not come into possession of His crown, until after this day of wrath? Will they not be compelled to admit for consistency's sake that the harvest and the treading of the winepress must be located away beyond 1914? It seems too much like desperation for them to take such ground, but they must do it or admit that a part of the harvest and the disposal of such as are represented by the clusters of the vine, and which are to be subjected to the wrath of God, take place after the Son of man is crowned. Will any one be so reckless as to take the ground that the "seven last plagues" of Revelation 15 contained in the "seven vials," in which are filled up the wrath of God, are to be fulfilled after the day of wrath is ended? Will any whose lamps are burning brightly with the light of the truth on the Times of the Gentiles, and the time of trouble or day of vengeance with which those times end, take the ground that the day of wrath extends beyond 1914? They must do all this, and thus ignore the parallelism between the two days of wrath, or admit that Christ receives His crown before the subjugation of the nations in this day of wrath.

Who among the careful and impartial readers will read from the 14th verse to the end of the 14th chapter of Revelation, and then believe that those who deny Christ's coming as King before the end of the harvest, have the clear and most advanced light, and that our lamps are gone out? We resent with a just indignation the assertion

so often made that our lamps are not burning. We never have confessed it in thought, word or deed. The so called "new supply" of oil we never asked for because we never wanted it. In the parable of Matthew 25 the foolish were the first to know and confess their lack; but in the last year, and because we could not indorse all their recklessly new and contradictory statements, some have labored earnestly to convince us that our lamps are out, but not one of us believes it. Then that application of the parable is incorrect. The case is different however with a class who in the 1844 movement saw light on the prophetic periods, then afterward gave it all up, and confessed that they had "no light on the harmonious ending of the prophetic periods." That was something like saying, "Our lamps have gone out."

We are not disposed to boast of our light; be it little or much it comes from the Lord, and to Him we would be grateful. We would be dishonoring Him as well as our own consciousness should we confess that we are without light or if we did not deny the oft repeated statement, that we do not even claim to have any increase of light on these glorious subjects. Those who have not seen new and advanced thought in ZION'S WATCH TOWER during the year of its existence, only prove to us that they have not given it a careful and impartial reading. We believe it is our duty and privilege to bring from the treasure house things both new and old. Matt. 13:52. And the new truth must always be in harmony with the old truths.

Now while we are teaching that there is a sense in which the Jewish age extended to the destruction of Jerusalem, and that in the same sense the Gospel age extends to 1914, we do not ignore the fact so well established years ago, that there is a sense in which the Jewish age ended at the death of Christ, and that in the same sense the Gospel age ended in the Spring of 1878. We believe the prophetic argument which fixes those two points is unanswerable;

and the illustration of the equality of the Two Dispensations as ending at those points is as clear and beautiful as it ever was.

God's dealings with the Jewish people, as a nation, ended at the Cross, but after that favor was extended to the remnant, until as we believe not a kernel of wheat was left to perish in the destruction of Jerusalem. It will not be difficult for those who understand what they are reading to see what would be a parallel to that in reference to the nominal Gospel church.

We believe the recognition of these two endings of each age and therefore the two phases of each harvest will be necessary to the understanding of some things yet to be developed. In the law there were two gatherings – first the first fruits and then the general harvest. This was true of each season, and is true, we believe, of both the Jewish and Gospel ages. The first in either case included those who were able to receive the presence of Christ during the first phase of the harvest; and it is their privilege to extend the truth for the acceptance of others afterward.

We have already shown that there was an extension of God's dealings with the remnant until the destruction of Jerusalem, and it can be shown that there was a work done and counted finished at the end as represented by the first cherub. The disciples under the personal supervision of Jesus gathered fruit for the Gospel barn or "unto life eternal" during the three years preceding the Cross. Compare Matt. 9:36-38 and Jno. 4:34-38. Jesus referring to that harvest work calls it, "to finish." Later He says "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Seventy weeks were determined on Daniel's people for certain specified purposes but Isaiah foretold a cutting short of the work, and Paul applies it at the end of the Jews' age. "For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Rom. 9:28. This was what Jesus did when He left their house desolate. Mark!

He both finished and cut it short. From which it is evident that the prophecy of the "seventy weeks" in Daniel 9 was fulfilled at the end of sixty-nine weeks and a half. The only point of the prophecy that does not seem to have been complete is the confirmation of the covenant, of the last verse, "for one week," but let it be observed that this was not to be on Daniel's people, but with many. Daniel's people ceased to be recognized as a nation when Jesus left them desolate, and Jerusalem ceased to be the "holy city" when the vail of the temple was rent, and the Gospel church from that time became God's dwelling place. This the New Testament clearly teaches, and only the remnant of Israel who accepted Christ were recipients of the Gospel favor.

Speaking of Christ leaving the house desolate, Paul quotes from Isaiah and applies it: "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed [remnant] we had been as Sodoma and been made like unto Gomorrah." Rom. 9:29. That we are not mistaken as to the proper time for the application of that prophecy is made plain by the Apostle himself. In the eleventh chapter after speaking of the casting off of the nation, in order to show that a remnant were to be saved he referred to himself as one who had not received Christ during the first part of the harvest, and then to the case of Elijah, who at one time thought all were gone; "But what saith the answer of God to him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Then Paul makes the application, "Even so then, at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Rom. 11:1-5. The point is, the nation was given up to desolation, but the remnant were to be saved out of the fire. It may be true, in fulfillment of Dan. 9:27, that the Gospel was preached exclusively to the Jews for three years and a half after the cross, but it is evident that the remnant were not all saved during that half week. Paul made a specialty of his Jewish brethren at least seventeen years after he was converted, (Gal. 1:18 and 2:1) and there

is reason to believe that the Jews who received Christ at any time before Jerusalem was destroyed were saved from that calamity as much as those who had accepted before. Thus He gathered the wheat and burned the chaff.

Those who believe in the parallel of the Two Dispensations may readily make the application here. Some accepted the presence of Christ during the three years preceding the Spring of 1878. These have the privilege of extending the truth on this subject for the faith of others. And we would say this truth is none the less true because some, and even leading spirits, who once believed it, have, under peculiar trial, now ignored the presence of Christ. To us there is great force in the statement of Revelation 11:18, that even all that fear God's name small and great are to be rewarded during the sounding of the seventh trumpet. We will not now speak of the manner in which the work will be done, but it is evident that not one kernel of true wheat, or using another scriptural figure, one lamb of the flock will be left out of the kingdom. The extension or prolonging of the dispensation is an expression of the longsuffering of God toward us (not speaking of the world, but of the too worldly church), not being willing that any should perish. Though ninety and nine were safely in, He will seek and find and bring home the last one.

J. H. P.

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"Human laws derive all their binding force from their divine original, the good must demand that which is right, and condemn that which is wrong." – Blackstone.

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