

THE DAY OF THE LORD.*

*The article in last issue entitled THE MANNER OF THE SECOND ADVENT, should have been headed, DISCOURSE NO. 4.

DISCOURSE NO. 5.

"The great day of His wrath is come; who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17.)

The "Day of the Lord" is a term which, strictly speaking, refers to the whole period during which Christ will be present, or the entire Millennial Age. But it is generally applied in the Scriptures to the coming or beginning of that day; to the period of time during which the Gospel and Millennial Ages lap, the one ending and the other commencing.

Concerning it we read, "The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light." (Amos 5:18.) It is "the great day of his wrath." This dark day is at once the closing scene of the night of weeping and the dawn of the morning of joy. And we would invite your attention, not merely to the scriptural evidence that there will be such a day, but especially to the events that will transpire during that day, and their chronological order.

This time of trouble comes first upon the Church, and afterward upon the world; but in our examination we will consider first the trouble of the nations during the day of the Lord. This trouble will be the natural consequence of the transfer of rulership from the Devil, who is the prince of this world, (John 14:30) to "him whose right it is" – Christ. (Ezek. 21:27.) And referring to that time, it is said, "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come." (Rev. 11:18.)

Unquestionably the kingdoms of this world are loyal to their prince. They are mainly controlled by selfish, and frequently by corrupt men, who, though unconsciously, have become the representatives of the prince of darkness, working his will. But when the rightful King takes control, he declares, "I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdom of the nations." (Hag. 2:22.) And thus "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." (Rev. 11:15.) First they must be brought to submission by chastisement, and then we read that all people, nations and languages shall serve him. (Daniel 7:14,27.)

The trouble is graphically described by the Prophet: "That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess....I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord....Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath." (Zeph. 1:15-18.) "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." (Zeph. 3:8,9.) So extreme is the trouble here described that the world is figuratively said to be burned up by the Lord's anger. Yet the effect is good, for after this indignation against and destruction of kingdoms, the people remain, and are so affected by the trouble that "they serve the Lord with one consent."

We expect that this distress and trouble will all come about in a very natural way. Very many Scriptures seem to teach that the

kingdoms of the earth will be overthrown by an uprising of the people, goaded to desperation from a sense of injustice, and seeking relief from oppression. Such an uprising and overturning, Socialists, Nihilists and Communists of to-day would gladly bring about if they could. Though the Scriptures recognize wrong and oppression as existing in the governments of the nations, and foretell this to be the means of their overthrow, yet they do not authorize God's children to oppose them. They show us that some agencies not in themselves good, will be made use of in destroying present evil governments, thus accomplishing the Lord's purpose, though they will not be aware that they are being so used. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." (Psalm 76:10.)

In harmony with this are the words of the Apostle James (5:1-4, Diaglott) – "Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are approaching. Your riches have decayed, and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have become rusted, and the rust of them will be for a testimony against you, and will eat your bodies as fire. [The rich will share in the trouble of the nations because so closely identified with them]. You have laid up treasures for the Last Days. Behold! that hire which you fraudulently withheld from those laborers who harvested your fields, cries out; and the loud cries of the reapers have entered into the ears of the Lord of Armies."

Rev. 6:15-17 describes the distress of that time, saying, "The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and

who shall be able to stand?" The powers of earth will seek to make alliances with one another for self-protection, and to hide themselves from the sure-coming storm. And individuals will seek to be covered and protected by the great mountains (kingdoms) of earth, and to be hid in the great ROCKS (protective secret societies). But they shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's anger; for all the kingdoms of the world shall be thrown down, and instead of these the kingdom of the Lord becomes a great kingdom, and fills the whole earth. (Dan. 2:35-45.)

Malachi (4:1) describes the coming day of trouble, and sees the anger of the Lord there displayed – the fire of God's jealousy: "Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be **[R592 : page 7]** stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up." Here the wicked are symbolized by stubble, God's wrath by fire, and the righteous by calves of the stall (verse 2). **[R593 : page 7]**

Peter describes this day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:10), and under the symbol of heavens refers to the governments – the higher or ruling powers. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise [overthrow of governments, with great confusion] and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The elements of the (heavens) governments, as well as of (earth) society in general, will be dissolved in the great trouble (fire) of that day.

The Scriptures also teach that while other nations fall during the day of the Lord, the long cast off nation of Israel will gradually come into prominence and be established in the land promised to their forefathers. They will doubtless go to Palestine, not through respect to promises of God of national restoration, but with true Jewish perception they will realize before others the danger to

which property, &c., will be exposed, and choose to be far away from the strongholds of communism. Persecution and various other circumstances will also serve to drive them thither.

Yet even there they will not long remain secure, for the Lord shows us through the Prophet Ezekiel (chap. 38) that when gathered out of all nations and dwelling safely, having silver and gold and cattle and goods, many nations shall come up against them to take a spoil and a prey; but the Lord shall deliver them with a marked deliverance, as in the day of battle in former times. And in this deliverance they shall recognize his hand and the Messiah, their deliverer.

Zech. 14:1-4 describes the battle then fought. "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoils shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity." Here God interposes and defends them, and here they come to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle" – as he fought for them in olden times. They will recognize the Lord in their miraculous deliverance from their enemies. He shall be revealed in flaming fire taking vengeance. (2 Thes. 1:8.)

In Zech. 12:3, God declares that he will deliver them, though all the people of the earth be gathered against them. Verse 10 describes their recognition of Him whom they have pierced, and their sorrow when, in that day, God "pours upon them the spirit of grace and supplication."

THE DAY OF THE LORD TO THE CHURCH.

The Church's trial or judgment, which has been going on during this age, ends in this day of the Lord. Paul points to this

day as the time for the consummation of the Church's hope, saying: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6.) He expected to rejoice in the day of Jesus Christ that he had not run in vain, neither labored in vain; and he urged the Church also to so labor and so run, that they might share in the same rejoicing in that day. (Phil. 2:14-18.) And when about to die he pointed forward to the day of the Lord as the time when he might expect his reward, saying: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Again this is called the Day of Redemption, and the saints are said to be sealed unto the day of redemption. (Eph. 4:30.) And the Holy Spirit of promise which we received after that we believed, is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory. (Eph. 1:13,14.)

What is the purchased possession? It is all that Christ bought with his blood; it includes the world of nature – "I will give thee the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psa. 2:8.)

It includes the world of humanity, who are brought back by the Second Adam to all they lost in the first; for "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man."

But evidently the purchased possession here referred to is the Bride of Christ – "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." (Eph. 5:27.) This is the special possession, which he purchased, which still awaits redemption – for "we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting

for the adoption, to wit: the redemption of our body" – the body of which Christ is the head. (Rom. 8:23.)

The end of this dispensation to the Church is a harvest which chronologically precedes the world's troubles. This harvest is in the day of the Lord – after Christ has come personally a second time.

The parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13) gives us a sketch of the Church's history from beginning to end. Jesus and the Apostles planted the good seed (truth), which sprang up and brought forth wheat. But while men slept the enemy brought in tares, until now the Church nominal abounds with tares, and a great separation becomes necessary, that the true wheat may be separated from the false. And this separating and gathering time is termed a harvest.

The Lord foresaw and intended that wheat and tares should grow together, for he said, "Let both grow together until the harvest." In the time of harvest the separating work is to be accomplished. When the division is accomplished, the wheat alone will represent the kingdom or Church of Christ, while the Church nominal will fall and be broken.

We are led to believe from various Scriptures that this fall of the great mass of the Church nominal, will be caused by the spread of infidelity, which seems to be described, in Psalm 91, as a great pestilence. There will be but one class that will be exempt from its evil influence, and that will be those Christians who have made the Most High their habitation, and who are acquainted with the Word of God. A thousand shall fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand; but the pestilence shall not come nigh them, because they have taken HIS TRUTH, and not human tradition, as their shield and buckler.

This answers the question of our text – "Who shall be able to stand?" This is the company, but it is only a little flock, as our Lord foretold it would be. These shall be accounted worthy to escape all those things coming on the world, and shall STAND in the presence of the Son of Man. (Luke 21:36.) "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Mal. 3:17.)

But there is a class mentioned, and I fear they are not few, who, while servants, are not faithful servants, waiting for the Lord, but who are engaged in revelry, eating and drinking with the world. "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 the teeth." (Matt. 24:51.)

These are not hypocrites, but unfaithful servants, who thereby lose the reward to which the faithful attain; but through the Lord's mercy they may come up out of great tribulation by washing their robes (Rev. 7:14); and though not privileged to be the bride of Christ, to which high office they were called, they are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. (Rev. 19:9.) Alas! it would seem that there are many such virgins, but not wise – wheat, but not ripe wheat, not ready to be garnered. They are living far below their privilege, and will suffer great loss.

Unlike these will be the "little flock" who obey the Master's injunction to "watch," and who follow his example of self-sacrifice. He did not tell us just when the dawn of the day would come, for he wanted to keep us continually on the watch. But when the time should come, he shows that such watching ones would know it. Referring to the signs of his coming and the end

of the age, he said, "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24:33.

Paul says, in 1 Thes. 5:1,2, "Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" – to the world, as the next verse shows. The world will know nothing of what is coming, and will be taken unawares; and many of the Lord's servants having fallen asleep, are not watching as commanded. Some are overcharged with the cares of this life, and some are intoxicated with the spirit of the world; only a few are watching. Will these know? Yes, "Ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober." (1 Thes. 5:4-6.)

We have a steady lamp to guide our feet, a sure word of prophecy unto which we do well to take heed as unto a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn. Let us keep our lamp trimmed and burning, and ourselves awake and watching. Our lamp shows that the great day of the Lord has already come, that the harvest work is progressing under the direction of the Lord of the harvest, now present. The faithful bride is even now making herself ready, and soon will enter into the joys of her Lord.
