

wrong. Judgment for it all surely comes at last, but the judgment of living men upon the earth, and not what John sees -- the judgment of the dead before the "great white throne," when the heaven and the earth flee away before the face of Him that sits on it.

But what says Malachi! "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." No question of eternal punishment is that, reader, but of the earth's purification from the evil-doing which so long has defiled it. "But unto you that fear My name shall the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall."

There is again the Jewish promise: earth cleared of its oppressors, and the shining forth of the Sun of righteousness. It is Christ's coming as we surely know; Christ's presence (the Light of the world) bathing the world with light. How blessed that universal day will be! How one pities the soul that does not bound with joy to think of it! "The whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

That is the sun-rising, then, and the day, and fitly and beautifully the Old Testament closes with the assurance of coming blessing and deliverance for that earth so long in the bondage of corruption. But now let us look at the close of the New Testament, and listen to some of its final words. The prophecy of the Apocalypse is over. The visions have passed away from the eye of the seer. There is one word of confirmation given: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." And what now? "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the *bright* and MORNING STAR."

Who can doubt the connection, -- who can fail to see the reference to Malachi? Yet who but must note the distinct and designed contrast also? While in each case the Person of the Lord Jesus is before the soul, in the one it is the Morning *Sun* that gleams on the horizon, in the other, the Morning *Star*, the herald, but not the bringer of the Day.

Do you think on that account the older revelation is the fuller and the grander? Do you say that surely the full flood-tide of day for the world must be better than the shadows of night upon it, even though the herald of the

day glitters in the darkness of the sky? All depends upon the point of view. For the world confessedly it is so, and the promise for the world is clearly in Malachi. But it does not follow that for the Christian the better thing is not in the revelation to the beloved disciple. And we shall find it to be so, if we look but a little closer.

"And I will give him the Morning Star" was the promise before this to the over-comers in Thyatira (Rev. 2:28). Associated with it is the promise of rule, -- the sharing of Christ's rule over the earth. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father" (vv. 26, 27). Thus in that coming day spoken of by Malachi in the passage quoted, the Christian's place will be that of joint-heirship with Him who has title over all. His place in the day-time for the earth is not forgotten. He is a child of the day now, and he will be then manifested as such. Indeed, as the apostle tells us (Rom. 8:19-21), "the whole creation," groaning in the bondage of corruption, waits with earnest expectation for the "manifestation of the sons of God" (the day of the "redemption of the body") as the period of its own deliverance. Not having partaken of the liberty of *grace*, which they now know, it will be yet brought into the liberty of the *glory*¹ which awaits them.

But while the saints of the present and the past will thus have place in the "day" of the earth's coming glory, and will be sharers of the rule of their glorified Lord then, there is another and a dearer promise in what is added to this in the address to the overcomers in Thyatira. "And I will give him the Morning Star," is plainly something *additional*; and Jesus' gift of Himself to His people is as plainly something more precious far than any gift of authority or rule, even along with Him, could be.

But why this particular form of the promise, "I will give him the *Morning Star*?" Plainly the word speaks of the Lord Jesus by a title which is only His until a certain time. The Morning star speaks of the coming day; and it *gives place* to it. When the day is fully come the Morning Star is gone. Has this, and can this have, any application to this promise? There can be no proper doubt that it has,

1. "Glorious liberty" of v. 21, should be "the liberty of the glory."

and that it is intended to convey to us the blessed and comforting assurance, that *before* day comes for the world, -- *before* Jesus shall arise for it as the "Sun of Righteousness," -- we shall see Him, be with Him, and find our portion in Him.

And thus it becomes clear why such emphasis is put upon this promise, and why it occupies in the *Christian* revelation the very same place that that in Malachi occupies in the Jewish. In the latter case it was the last closing word of utterances which had gone on almost continuously for over thirteen hundred years: the last word left to linger in the ears and fill the heart of the believer of those days. In presence of the evil and confusion everywhere, he was called to look for the coming of One whose was the rightful throne of the whole earth, and who would put forth His claim, and still its confusions into peace, and banish the sin and evil from it. For us, while we do not forget or cease to look for this, -- a better and a sweeter hope is left us. The King will come: yes, assuredly, and we shall be in His train in that day of His triumph, and He will give us to sit with Him on His throne, as He has promised. But before and beyond all this, is our own proper and peculiar joy. Then, while the shadows of the night rest still upon the earth, before the morning dawns and the Sun of the endless day kisses the hill-tops in token of its approach, the Morning Star will be ours; we in our own place and privilege in the Father's house of many mansions shall be with Himself, and

-- "hear His voice, and see His face,
And know the fulness of His grace."

This is our hope -- a hope independent of earth and its blessing. For that He will come again, most surely: but "when Christ, who is our life, shall *appear*, "then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). When He comes forth to execute judgment, He will "come *with* ten thousand of His Saints" (Jude 14). The white horsed Rider, "King of kings and Lord of lords," coming to break with "a rod of iron" the pride and strength of the rebellions nations of the earth, will be followed by the array of heaven's armies, whose "fine linen, white and clean," -- for "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints," -- makes manifest who they are (see Rev. 19). Not to judge *them* will He then come. They will be with the Judge in that judgment, and will judge with Him; for "the saints shall judge the world" (1 Cor. 6:2).

Before that day of His appearing, then, the saints must be with their Lord. They must be with Him before

He appears, if they are to "appear with Him." And if we look at that scene in Revelation (ch. 19), just now referred to, we may see if we will, how these white-robed saints have been employed before ever "the heavens opened." We may look on, and see them in another character, not as warriors, but gathered in one company, assembled at a bridal-supper, "the marriage-supper of the Lamb," and the company itself one that bears that significant title of union and of intimacy, "the wife" of the Lamb.

Yes, "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." And there they are with festal gladness in all the fulness of the joy of that heavenly place, before ever the judgment or the blessing of the earth has come.

This is the hope of the "Morning Star." The herald of the coming day for earth itself it is, when the Lord assumes that character. The day of "His patience" is over. He has "asked," and gotten "the heathen for His inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." He is to rule them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. But the first point of preparation for this is to gather the company of His co-heirs together, the sharers of the day of his prosperity and power, as before of the day of His rejection and suffering. If they have suffered, they must also reign with Him. And the first thought of His heart, when that long expected time arrives, is to have His people with Himself, -- to take them up out of the world before the brooding thunder-clouds of judgment break.

How many precious assurances cluster around this hope of the Morning Star! But I want to point out briefly, how simply Scripture distinguishes between the two parts or stages of Christ's coming. He comes to take up His people out of the world unto Himself. He comes afterwards *with* them to judge yet to bless the earth. These two things are never confounded in the Word of God.

In the comfort the apostle is giving to the Thessalonian saints concerning their departed brethren, he gives the two things together, much as we have seen them now. They had thought, plainly, that while the living saints at His appearing would reign with Him in His kingdom and glory, the departed ones had missed their share in this. He answers them on the contrary that in that day, "those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. 4:14). How then would that be? He anticipates as the enquiry, and answers it with the statement that they

were to be raised again in order to be brought with Jesus. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep; for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to *meet the Lord in the air*, and so we shall ever be with the Lord.”

Our meeting-place is not on earth, then. It is “in the air.” Thither the Lord has descended, but as yet unrevealed to the nations of the earth, when the dead and living saints are raised or changed, and caught up to be with Him. It would not appear from these passages, however, that any great lapse of time necessarily intervened between this taking up of the saints to the Lord, and His coming with them to the judgment. It would not even suggest itself perhaps to us that there was any. Still when we look a little closer, there are difficulties in the way of believing that all does, take place, as it were, at once.

In the first place, who are the “sheep” of Matt. 25, in this case? The common application of this passage is indeed to the day of *final* judgment before the “great white throne”; but this is every way wrong. For the prophecy of ch. 24 and 25 is one, complete whole, and the Lord’s coming spoken of is manifestly what we have spoken of as His “appearing.” It is at the close of Jerusalem’s great trouble (ch. 24:16, 21, 29) and for their deliverance (13), just as in Zechariah (14); and the Lord then sets up His throne on earth, and gathers, not the dead of all times, but the living nations of those times, before Himself. There is no hint of resurrection, or of the fleeing away of the heavens and the earth. They are judged not according to their whole “works,” as in Rev. 20, but upon the ground simply of receiving or neglecting certain people whom in a special way He calls His “brethren.” In a word, all is most distinctly different from the final day of account. This last is *after* the millennium, that in Matthew *before* it, and as I have before said, is parallel to Zech. 14, where also the Lord comes to end Jerusalem’s distress, to be King over all the earth, and Judge of the nations.

But then, just here is the difficulty. If the Lord comes, gathers all His saints to meet Him in the air, and immediately comes on with them to the judgment of the earth, how is it that there are “sheep” to be found there

when he comes? Nor can it be said, that these are suddenly converted at that time, for it is quite evident that they have had by the King’s own account of them, sufficient time to prove their faith by their works, in clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and visiting the sick and prisoners. Thus it seems that an interval there must have been between the Lord’s taking up his people and His coming to judgment with them, to allow for the conversion of these souls spared and blessed at His judgement seat on earth.

And so indeed it is. There *is* an interval, and one filled with events of intense interest and deepest importance. It is the time when He who will have then accomplished the work of educating, and taking to Himself out of the earth, a *heavenly* people, will take in hand to raise up for himself on earth, an *earthly* people. And it is a principle of His dealing with fallen men -- a solemn but necessary one, -- that in order to blessing there must be judgment. We are told expressly: “When Thy judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Judgement then is coming; and He allows the evil that is to be judged, to come out openly. The masses of Christendom, -- the true saints throughout it having been taken out, -- then become speedily and openly infidel to the truth. The “form” of godliness is put off, as well as the “power” denied. Corruption becomes apostasy. A real and personal antichrist, energized by Satan into a power of evil, of which men have little conception now, yet for which things are even now preparing, will head up the old confederacy, never yet extinct, “against the Lord and against His Christ.” The Jews will recognize as their Messiah one who, coming in his own name, will do over again in their sight miracles² such as Elias did. And the old strife between the serpent’s and the woman’s seed will ripen into its last decisive form of *Deified* MAN against Incarnate GOD.

Scenes such as this the earth will yet surely see. And yet He, whose hand is, spite of all, the hand that holds and governs everything, will make all this a school for the education of a people for Himself. Even then there will be a remnant according to the election of grace: a Jewish remnant, as in Matthew 24; a Gentile remnant, as in Matthew 25. Persecution shall be theirs, the earthly

2. {Keep in mind that Scripture calls these “powers and signs and wonders of falsehood” (2 Thess. 2:9).}

heritage, as of old, of the Lord’s people. Tribulation, such as if it were not shortened, “no flesh should be saved.” Gifted of God, they endure to the end, and they *are* saved. Zechariah and Matthew have witnessed how.

This is all unproved at present; and I cannot enter here upon the proofs. The mention of such things even at least would urge to search out of that book of the Lord, which, thank God, lies open before us all. I have spoken of these things with this object. Reader, I am no prophet and no prophet’s son, -- but the deepest, darkest night-time for the world lies yet before us, not behind. Again, thank God! over this deepest darkness -- brighter, if possible, for such a scene -- there shines the brightness of the Morning Star! Oh, what a relief! We wait -- *not* for the night to grow darker; not for signs and seasons, or times and days to be fulfilled; we “*wait* for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.”

“I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star.” Amid a scene such as lies around us, the closing words of the Book of God direct our outlook to this blessed object. Left to linger in our ears and upon our hearts, they bid us be occupied, not with the evil but with the good; not with earth but heaven; to be with lamps burning and loins girded, as men that wait for their Lord. Reader, He is coming! “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come!” Hark, once again, “He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

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The Hope of the Morning Star

If we will carefully compare the prophetic outlook in the books of the Old Testament with that of the New, we shall be struck with the real contrast which is found under the apparent resemblance. Thus “Jerusalem” figures in the book of Revelation as distinctly as in Ezekiel, as the holy city of days yet to come. The details, too, resemble each other closely. How like the water of life issuing from the throne of God and the Lamb in the one, with the tree of life upon its banks, bearing the twelve manner of fruits and yielding its fruit every month, and its leaves being for the healing of the nations, to those which, in Ezekiel 47, issue from the sanctuary, and pouring forth into the salt sea, heal it, upon whose banks trees of unfading verdure bring forth in like manner new fruit according to the months, and the fruit thereof is for meat and the leaf for medicine. Any one may see that the one description is, as it were, borrowed from the other. Yet the one is a heavenly scene, the other an earthly. The one Jerusalem is the old city of wondrous memory, with its temple once again rebuilt, and its old ordinances even in some measure restored. The other is the “heavenly” Jerusalem, where no temple is, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. In the one case we are in view of earthly and Jewish, in the other of heavenly promises, and the two answer to each other, just as the things of earth are the shadow of heavenly realities.

Ezekiel’s are Jewish premises; John’s are Christian. Simple and obvious as the distinction seems, it would have been well if readers and teachers had kept it in mind, and not confounded things so different. Israel then would not have been robbed of her own portion, and the hopes of the Church of God not degraded to Jewish ones.

Let us turn, then, with this distinction in mind, to the close of the Old Testament, to compare it a moment with the close of the New.

The day of the Lord is before Malachi. Man’s day is over. He has done what he would for some six thousand years, at least, of restlessness and strife and