

## How will Christ Come?

Having considered in our last the object of our Lord's return, the manner in which he will come becomes to all who "love His appearing" one of great interest, and now invites your attention.

In order that we may have a good foundation, and as a basis for further investigation, we will first inquire. What is a spiritual body? What powers are theirs, and by what laws are they governed? We are here met by the objections – we have no right to pry into the hidden things of God: and, "Eye hath not seen, ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him." To both of these propositions we assent, but believe we cannot find out by studying God's word – and our investigation will be confined to it – what he has not revealed. The above quotation of scripture (1 Cor. 2:9) refers to the natural or carnal man, and by reading it, in connection with the three verses which follow the objection vanishes; for, says the apostle, "God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit," which was given to us "that we might know the things freely given unto us of God;" and in the last clause of vs. 13, he gives us the rule by which we may know, viz.: "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." We are very apt to invert this rule and compare spiritual things with natural, and thus get darkness instead of light. Let us now use the apostle's rule.

There is a spiritual body as well as a natural body; a heavenly, as well as an earthly body; a celestial as well as a terrestrial. They are distinct and separate. (1 Cor. 15:38,40.) We know what the fleshly, natural body is, for we now have such; it is flesh, blood and bones; for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and since there are two kinds of bodies, we know that the spiritual is not composed of flesh, blood and bones, whatever it may be, it is a spiritual body, and "that which

is born of the spirit is spirit." But of what material a spiritual body is composed, we know not, for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we shall be like Him." [Christ.]

## **ANGELS ARE SPIRITUAL BODIES.**

Christ was raised from the dead a spiritual body; this was His second birth. First, born of the flesh a fleshly body – for, "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." (Heb. 2:14.) He was "Put to death in the flesh but quickened [made alive] by the Spirit." He was raised a spiritual body. This resurrection was His second birth. He was the "first born from the dead," "the first-born among many brethren." The church are those brethren and will have a second birth of the same kind as His, viz.: to spiritual bodies by the resurrection, when we shall awake in His likeness – being made "Like unto Christ's glorious body." But, this second birth must be preceded by a begetting of the spirit – conversion – just as surely as a birth of the flesh is preceded by a begetting of the flesh. Begotten of the flesh – born of the flesh – in the likeness of the first Adam, the earthly; begotten of the spirit – in the resurrection born of the spirit into the likeness of the heavenly, the second Adam. "As we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We may, then, by examining facts recorded of angels, and of Christ after His resurrection, gain general information with regard to spiritual bodies, thus "comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

First, Angels can be, and frequently are, present, yet invisible; for, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that are His, and delivereth them;" and "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.) Are you an heir of salvation? Then, doubtless, they have ministered to you. Have they ministered visibly or invisibly? Undoubtedly the latter. Elisha was surrounded by a host of Assyrians, his servant was fearful;

Elisha prayed to the Lord and the young man's eyes were opened and he "saw the mountains round about Elisha full of chariots of fire and horsemen of fire" (or like fire). Again, while to Baalam the angel was invisible the ass' eyes being opened saw him.

Second, Angels can and have appeared as men. The Lord and two angels so appeared to Abraham, who had a supper prepared for them, of which they ate. At first, Abraham supposed them to be "three men," and it was not until they were about to go that he discovered one of them to be the Lord, and the other two angels, who afterward went down to Sodom and delivered Lot. (Gen. 18:1.) An Angel appeared to Gideon as a man, but afterward made himself known. An Angel appeared to Samson's mother and father; they thought him a man until He ascended up to heaven in the flame of the altar. (Judges 13:20.)

Third, Spiritual bodies are glorious in their normal condition and are frequently spoken of as glorious and bright. The countenance of the angel who rolled away the stone from the sepulcher "was as the lightning." Daniel saw a glorious spiritual body whose eyes were as lamps of fire, his countenance as the lightning, his arms and feet like in color to polished brass, his voice as the voice of a multitude; before him Daniel fell as a dead man. (Daniel 10:6.) John, on the isle of Patmos, saw Christ's glorious body, (Rev. 1:14) and describes the appearance in almost the same language – His voice was as the sound of many waters, His eyes as lamps of fire, His feet like fine brass as it burns in a furnace, (so bright that you can scarcely look at it), John falls at His feet as dead; but He said to him, fear not; I am He that was dead; behold I am alive forevermore. Saul of Tarsus saw Christ's glorious body. It shone above the brightness of the sun at noonday. Saul lost his sight and fell to the ground, &c.

We have thus far found spiritual bodies truly glorious; yet, without a miracle, either the opening of our eyes to see them, or their appearing in the flesh as men, they are invisible. This conclusion is

further confirmed when we examine the more minute details connected with these manifestations. The Lord was seen of Saul alone, "they that journeyed with him...seeing no man." (Acts 9:7.) The men that were with Daniel did not see the glorious being he describes, but a great fear "fell on them and they ran and hid themselves." Again, this same glorious being declares: (Daniel 10:13.) "The prince of Persia withstood me one and twenty days." "Daniel, the man greatly beloved" of the Lord, falls as dead before this one whom Persia's prince withstands one and twenty days. How is this? Surely, He did not appear in glory to the prince; no; either He was invisibly present with him, or else

### **HE APPEARED AS A MAN.**

Christ is a spiritual body since His resurrection. During the forty days of His presence before ascension, He appeared some seven or eight times to His disciples; where was He the remainder of the time? Present but invisible. Notice, also, that in each instance He is said to have appeared, or He showed Himself, language never used of Him before His change from a natural to a spiritual body; now, as angels do – He appeared &c. Not only so, but He appeared in different bodies – as the gardener to Mary, "after that, He appeared in another FORM to two of them as they went into the country." Notice, it was in another form and consequently not the same one in which he appeared to Mary. (Mark 16:12.) Afterwards He appeared in a body, either the same or like the one crucified, having the marks of the spear and the nails. "He came and stood in their midst, the doors being shut." On these various occasions He appeared, talked with them, then vanished out of their sight as the wind; they could not tell whence He came nor whither He went. "So is every one that is born of the spirit." When we are born of the spirit (at the resurrection) we can do so also. All spiritual beings exhibit this same power. But Jesus said: "handle me; for a spirit [pneuma] hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" and

He ate with them. True; I believe it. So did the angels [pneuma] (Heb. 1:7) appear as men in flesh and bones; they ate also; their spiritual bodies did not eat, nor were they flesh and bones, but the body in which they appeared was flesh, and it ate. The disciples did not see Christ's glorious spiritual body, but as He appeared in a fleshly body. St. Paul teaches us distinctly that Christ was raised from the dead a life-giving spirit, [pneuma, the same word used by our Lord.] (1 Cor. 15:44,45.) But where did He get the various bodies in which He appeared? I cannot answer you; but I believe, and you do also, other things which we cannot understand. I cannot understand how that grain of wheat grows. Yet I know it does. I know not how Christ turned the water into wine, or healed the sick, or raised the dead. Yet I believe that He did these things. Can you tell me where He got the clothes He wore after His resurrection? "They parted His raiment among them, and for His vesture they cast lots" – the old were gone, and the linen clothes lay in the sepulcher. Is it more difficult for spiritual beings, with their powers, to create a covering of flesh than a covering of cloth? No; the same power can and did do both.

Thus we have found Christ's spiritual body like those of angels; glorious, yet invisible to mortals, with power to manifest the glory; or appear as a man or in any form He may choose. In the resurrection we shall be like the angels; and "like unto Christ's glorious body." We shall be like Him; for (not until then) we shall see Him as He is," for though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more," [after the flesh.] (2 Cor. 5:16.) Such a spiritual being was Christ, at the time of His ascension, and with **[R19 : page 2]** what we have learned of the powers of that spiritual body, we are now, we hope, prepared to inquire:

### **"HOW WILL HE COME AGAIN?"**

Briefly stated, we believe the Scriptures to teach, that, at His coming and for a time after He has come, He will remain invisible;

afterward manifesting or showing Himself in judgments and various forms, so that "every eye shall see Him." But every eye will not see Him at the same moment. A similar statement is made of the Resurrection, "All that are in their graves hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth." Taken by itself, this seems to teach the resurrection of all at once. Yet we know that there is a first resurrection composed of the "blessed and holy" only.

"Behold, I come as a thief" is the way He frequently spoke to His disciples of His coming. He comes "as a thief" for the church – the waiting virgins, both "they that sleep in Jesus" – the first resurrection – and "we, who are alive and remain," "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"In that day two shall be in the mill, two in the field, two in bed; one be taken and the other left" – like Enoch, who was not, for the Lord took him." The world will go on with its affairs, unconscious of the great changes of dispensation.

The second advent, like the first, covers a period of time, and is not the event of a moment. The first lasted nearly thirty-four years, and the events connected with it – His birth, baptism, sorrow, death, resurrection, etc., as mentioned by the prophets, all took place at the first advent. The second advent, as we have seen, lasts much longer. It includes the millennial reign, and prophecy covers all the prominent features of that reign. He comes to reign – must reign until He has put down all enemies; the last being death. 1 Cor. 15:25.

In the application of prophecy to the events of the first advent, we recognize order. Christ must be the "child born and son given" "before the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He must die before He could rise from the dead, etc. So also in studying prophecy referring to the second advent we must recognize order; we must judge of the order somewhat by the character of the event. As the wife is the glory of the husband, so the Bride is the glory of Christ, for we are to

be "partakers of the glory that shall be revealed," (1 Pet. 5:1,10) and as the "glory shall be revealed [R19 : page 3] in us." (Rom. 8:18.) We know that Christ could not come in the glory of his kingdom [church] until he has first gathered it from the world. In harmony with this thought we read – "When He shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory." (Col. 3:4.)

The prophets foretold the sufferings of Christ [head and body] and the glory that should follow. If the sufferings were of the whole body, so is the glory we suffer with Him that we may be also "glorified together." (Rom. 8:17.) "Enoch prophesied, saying – the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints," [gr. hagios, never translated angel.] (Jude 14.) Again, (Zech. 14:5) we read – "the Lord my God shall come and all thy saints with thee." Thus we learn that when He appears in glory we are with Him, and of course, we must be caught to meet Him before we could appear with Him.

We have further evidence to offer, proving that He comes unknown to the world; but attempt to answer two supposed objections first; viz.: "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven," (Acts 1:11) and "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise." (1 Thes. 4:16.) These Texts are supposed to teach that Christ will come visible to every eye, while the air is rent with the blast of the Archangel's trumpet, at which, mid reeling tombstones and opening graves the dead will be resurrected. It certainly has that appearance on the surface, and doubtless was intended to be so understood until due; but look at it again; would that be coming in like manner as they saw Him go? He did not go with the sounding of a trumpet and outward demonstration. It does not say you shall see Him coming, nor that any one would so see, but – He shall come. When he arrives it will be privately. He comes to organize us – the Church – as His kingdom; to

set us up. He comes to be glorified in His saints in that day (2 Thes. 1:10.) The world saw him not after His resurrection; they did not see Him ascend. And "He shall so come in like manner" – unknown to the world. As He said, "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more," nor will they see Him at His second advent until His church is gathered, for when He shall appear we also shall appear with Him." What, then, does the trumpet mean? Let us see. We are to be rewarded "at the resurrection," we surely will not be rewarded twice nor resurrected twice. We conclude, therefore, that the "Trump of God," (1 Thes. 4:16) and the "Last Trump," (1 Cor. 15:52,) are the same, differently expressed; the same events are mentioned as occurring at each, viz.: the resurrection and reward of the saints, and for the same reason we believe the "Trump of God" and "Last Trump" to be the "Seventh Trump" of Rev. 11:15,18. Under it also the dead are judged and the prophets and saints rewarded. Then the "Seventh Trump" is the "Last Trump," and is called, "The Trump of God," possibly because introducing the special judgments of God connected with the setting up of His kingdom.

These trumpets evidently are the same, but what? The seventh angel sounded. A sound on the air? No, not any more than the six which preceded it. They are each said to sound, and Sir Isaac Newton, Clarke, and all commentators of note agree that five or six of these trumpets are in the past. They have been fulfilled in events upon the Earth, each covering a period of time. They certainly must all sound before the resurrection, for that is under the seventh. If

## **THE SEVENTH TRUMP**

were to make a sound on the air, it would be out of harmony with the other six of the series. That it covers "the great day of His wrath," the time of judgments upon the kingdoms of the world and of the pouring out of the "seven vials" of His wrath, the "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation" seems more than probable, for we



are told in the same sentence of the wrath of God coming on the nations.

We see then, that the sounding of the trumpets, and so coming in like manner, do not conflict but rather add force to the fact that He comes "unawares," "as a thief" and steals away from the world "His treasure, His jewels," remember too that this is Christ the spiritual body, that could not be seen without a miracle, that was present yet unseen during thirty-three days after his resurrection.

But will the world not see the saints when gathered or gathering? No; they are changed (in the twinkling of an eye) from Natural to Spiritual bodies, like unto Christ's glorious body, and in the instant of their change &c., will be as invisible as He and angels. But those who arise from their graves? – No, they were sown (buried) natural bodies, they are raised spiritual bodies – invisible. Won't the world see the graves open and the tombstones thrown down? A spiritual body (remember we are comparing spiritual things with spiritual, not natural) coming out of the grave will not make any more of a hole in the ground than Christ's spiritual body made in the door when "He came and stood in their midst, the doors being shut." But do not forget that only the church are raised spiritual bodies, all others, natural fleshly bodies as Lazarus, &c.

## **PRESENCE OF CHRIST BEFORE THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH.**

Christ's personal presence and ministry of three and a half years at the first advent, as well as the three and a half years which followed his ministry is termed – "The harvest." It was the harvesting of the Jewish or Law age. Christ was present as the chief reaper. His disciples as under-reapers; their work was separating of wheat from chaff and the gathering of the wheat into the higher or Gospel dispensation. That harvest was the end of that age. Jesus said to His disciples, "Lift up

your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor, other men (the prophets) have labored and ye are entered into their labors." (John 4:38.) That work was not general, nor for the world. He confined His labors to Judea, and the work to them did not cease until five days before His death, when he rode on the ass into the city, wept over it, gave them up, and their house was left unto them desolate. After His resurrection He sends the disciples to "preach the Gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem"; nor were they suffered to preach to the world in general until the seven years of harvest work to that Jewish people was fully accomplished as God had promised. (Daniel 9:27.) "He (Jesus, chief reaper) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, (seven years) in the midst of the week making all sacrifice to cease" – himself being offered – the true sacrifice. But these three and a half years of the Gospel age were a harvest to none but the Jewish church; the Gospel church does not reap but sows the seed. Paul plants, Apollos [R20 : page 3] waters, God gives increase, etc. But there is to be a harvest in the end of this age, as illustrated in the parable of the tares and wheat, and taught in the explanation of the same. Notice that both wheat and tares, are in the kingdom of heaven, – the church – and that this parable, as also the other six of the series, refers not to the non-professing world, but to two classes in the church.

The Son of Man planted the church pure, good seed. During the days of the Apostles there were special "gifts of the Spirit" such as "discerning of spirits," etc., by which they were able to prevent tares getting in among the wheat – hypocrites getting into the church. (Instance 1 Cor. 5:3 – "Simon Magus" – "Ananias and Sapphira," etc.) but when the Apostles were dead, "while men slept" – the enemy began to sow tares among the wheat. Paul says that the mystery of iniquity had begun to work even in his day; now, they grow side by side in all our churches. Shall we separate them, Lord? No (we might make some mistake, pull up wheat and leave tares.) "Let both grow

together until the Harvest." (Matt. 13.) The harvest is the end of the world" [aion age.] "In the time of harvest I will say unto the reapers – the reapers are the angels – gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

Notice, this Harvest is the end of this age, yet, like the one ending, the Jewish age, it is a period of time – "In the time of harvest" – secondly, there is order – "gather first the tares." There will come a time, then, in the end of this age, when the reapers – angels – will be present doing some sort of a separating work in the Church; and yet it is an invisible presence, for when the wheat is gathered (after the binding of the tares,) – translated, when "we which are alive are caught up to meet the Lord" – when taken they are in the field, mill and bed; would they be so engaged if they had seen angels going about gathering tares? No; it is an invisible work, done by beings invisible.

Again, before the living are gathered, the dead in Christ must have risen, whether it be but a moment before: "the dead in Christ rise first, then we which are alive," &c. (1 Thess. 4:16.) This harvest is not of the living only, but also of "the dead in Christ" "those that sleep in Jesus." The angels gather the living, but our Lord, who is the chief reaper here (as He was in the Jewish harvest), gathers or raises the dead. "I will raise him up;" "I am the resurrection and the life;" and in harmony with this thought, we find that in Rev. 14:15 – "One like unto the Son of Man, seated on a cloud," reaps the earth. Here, two harvests, or two parts of one harvest, are shown, the second being the casting of the vine of the earth into the wine-press of His wrath. The special point to which your attention is called, however, is the fact that the harvest will go on without outward demonstration, the chief and under-reapers being present but unseen.

### **THE PRESENCE (PAROUSIA) OF CHRIST.**

Some may have confounded these remarks on the presence of Christ in a spiritual body, with the presence of the spirit of Christ; but

they are quite distinct. The latter never left the church; consequently in that sense He could not "come again." Of His spiritual presence he said: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." We refer to the personal presence which did go away, and will come again – a spiritual body.

The Greek word generally used in referring to the second advent – Parousia, frequently translated coming – invariably signifies personal presence, as having come, arrived, and never signifies to be on the way, as we use the word coming. This fact is recognized by many who are looking for the Lord, but the error under which the church in general is laboring, is that of supposing that presence implies sight – manifestation – appearance. In the Greek, however, other words are used to express revelation, appearing and manifestation, viz: phaneroo – rendered shall appear in "when He shall appear, &c.," – and apokalupsis – rendered, shall be revealed – 2 Thess. 1:7. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed."

But we have Christ's own words to prove that He will be present in the world, and the world will not know of it. Matt. 24:37, we read: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the parousia (presence) of the Son of Man be." The presence of Christ is not compared to the flood, but to the days of Noah, the days that were before the flood, as verse 38 shows; as then they ate, drank, married, etc., and knew not, so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be. The resemblance here mentioned is that of not knowing – they will not know of the presence of Christ. They may have been wicked then, and doubtless were, and may be similarly wicked in His presence; but wickedness is not the point of comparison, as then they ate, drank, married – proper enough things to be doing, not sins; so shall it be in Christ's presence. Now look at Luke 17:26, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." Verse 27 tells us how it was in the days of Noah, they were eating, drinking, marrying, etc. "So shall it be

in the days of the Son of Man." Surely the days of the Son of Man are not before His days, any more than the days of Henry Clay could be days before he was born. No; the more we examine the more we are convinced that the world will go on as usual, and know not until "the harvest is past, the summer ended," and they are not in the ark, not with the little flock "accounted worthy to escape." There will be no outward demonstration of the second advent having begun, and Christ being present, until the church is gathered, whenever it takes place – soon or in the distant future.

We think we have good solid reasons – not imaginations – not dreams nor visions, but Bible evidences (known to the majority of our readers) that we are now "in the days of the Son;" that "the day of the Lord" has come, and Jesus, a spiritual body, is present, harvesting the Gospel age; yet, as He had said, the world seeth Him no more; they eat, drink, etc., and know not. This day of the Lord, in which "He will show who is that blessed and only potentate, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings," is already dawning, but the majority of the professing church, as well as the world, are asleep; and to them – The day so cometh as a thief in the night. "But ye, brethren are not in darkness, that that day should come upon you as a thief." "We are not of the night, therefore let us not sleep as do others." This is the signification of our sub-title, "HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE." Not the worldly wise but those humble ones, wise from heavenly instruction are meant when it is written: "The wise shall understand," but "If thou shalt not watch thou shalt not know, what hour I will come upon thee." Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with...the cares of this life, and so that day come upon YOU unawares." The events of "the day of God Almighty" will next be considered.

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