

AS THE LIGHTNING.

LUKE 17:20-24.

Jesus had taught that he was the heir of the kingdom of Judah and Israel and that the kingdom was come nigh – was very close at hand and we remember that it was but a short time after this, that he came riding on the colt thus presenting himself as their King; in fulfillment of Zech. 9:9: "Behold thy King cometh unto thee." Thus he offered himself to them and was rejected as had been foretold; and consequently did not set up the kingdom. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

The Pharisees were talking together of this strange and queer man whose friends and disciples were poor and ignorant. They say to themselves, what nonsense this man talks; how he is deceiving these poor people, by raising in their minds the hope that He will some day be a King and then they shall share the kingdom with him; and these miracles which he has power to do seem to make the matter a settled fact with these his followers. Let us go to Him and in the hearing of his disciples, let us ask him how, when and where his kingdom will come &c., that his followers may see the impossibility of his claims being true.

And when he (Jesus) was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall ye say, Lo, here! or Lo, there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you (or marginal reading will be among you.)" Jesus here made known something concerning his kingdom that must have astonished both the Pharisees and also his disciples, viz: That His kingdom when established would pervade all society and control all, but be seen by none, as he said again at another time to Nichodemus, "you must be

born again," born to spiritual bodies before you can "see the kingdom of God" or "enter into it" just as we know also a man must be begotten of the "spirit of truth" before he can even understand the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God" as recorded in scripture.

The disciples heard this account of the kingdom and probably did not comprehend it, for the Spirit, not yet being given, they could not understand spiritual things. (1 Cor. 2:10.) But Jesus takes advantage of the moment to drop a word to his disciples which the Spirit would afterward open to their understanding. And He said unto his disciples "The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man."

Jesus was looking far away into the future, to the time of the setting up of his kingdom just mentioned to the Pharisees, and he surely knew as he looked at our day and at us the disciples living in his days – "in the days of the Son of man," the days of his parousia – presence in which he says the world in general will continue at their customary employment, "eating, drinking, planting, building &c.," all unconscious of him "and know not of his presence," (verse 26 and Matt. 24:37-39,) that our hearts would be longing so much for his communion and to "see him whom my soul loveth" that He foresaw we say, that our very intensity of longing, would open a tender spot for our enemy to attack. He knew too that our "enemy, the devil as a roaring lion" is continually seeking to overcome us and knows full well the points most easily attacked. Therefore he makes special mention of this, to put us on our guard, saying: ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man (as you now see them – seeing me present and in the flesh), "and ye shall NOT see.

And this is the more significant to us because the Lord informs us that there will be in these "days of the Son of man," false teachers who will be very powerful and exercise much influence upon the church, "For false Christs (deceptions) and false prophets (false

teachers) shall arise and shall show signs and seduce (lead into confusion and error) if possible even the elect." "And then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ or lo, he is there, believe him not. Mark 13:21. So too we read in Matt. 24:23-28, that Jesus said: "Behold I have told you before [I have forewarned you] wherefore if they (false teachers) shall say unto you, 'Behold he is in the desert, go not forth.'" Since we must apply this scripture to the "days of the Son of man," "days of His (parousia) presence," we look about us to see if any are making such claims, and we believe we find these false teachers (We do not say that they may not, for all their falsity be Christians. We will not disfellowship any one.) We believe we find them in those who claim that Jesus is to appear shortly in the wilderness of Judea (Palestine) and that all who love him and expect to be part of his kingdom should go there and be on hand to receive and welcome him. In accordance with this claim, it is perhaps known to many of our readers that colonies are now being organized in New England and money raised to start a company to **[R114 : page 2]** establish this teaching and to prepare the way for others to follow.

True Palestine is not a "desert" in the sense we generally use it but it is, in the sense of being a wilderness – or a place deserted as we read of Jesus when he went to pray "he went into a desert place alone." And we regard this as the thing against which Jesus warned us saying, "go not forth." But there is to be more than one of these deceiving teachers; While one says He is coming in the desert, another says: "Behold he is in the secret chambers." Do we find teaching of this kind now, in the days of the Son of man? Yes, it seems to us that this is being fulfilled; a brother whom we knew well and loved much, thinks that God has given him what he terms "New Oil" (perhaps he does not notice that the virgins of Matt. 25, do not get any new oil; it is the same oil they had at first). But this brother is we think fulfilling this scripture. He is teaching that after 1881,

Christ will appear in the flesh secretly, to be seen only by himself and those who believe exactly as he believes. This teaching not only leads to unscriptural expectations, but seems to open the minds of those who receive it to a perilous snare of the devil, which snare is referred to in the "Three Worlds," a book written by this very brother, in 1876, now out of print but possessed by many of our readers, extracts from which will follow this article. The wide diversity of views as stated in that article, and his present view as stated above seems to make good his claim that he has new oil; but it does not commend itself to us as being as good as the old "The old is better." Nor does it answer the conditions of the parable for no new oil was given.

But what does Jesus say to us; are we to expect to see Him in the secret chamber? No, he said "believe it not." Well, Lord, tell us then, how and where shall we meet you. Jesus' answer is: "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." As the eagles seem instinctively without call or noise, or warning, to assemble from every different point, near and far, so, we understand the Lord to teach, will be our gathering together unto him. We shall be caught away to meet the Lord. Two in the field, bed and mill, "one taken and the other left." "and they said unto him, where Lord, (taken where,) and He said unto them wheresoever the body is thither will the eagles be gathered together." (Compare Matt. 24:28 and Luke 17:37.)

Thus does Jesus seem to say to us positively, "If they say to you he is in the desert, go not forth, (or) behold in the secret chamber, believe not."

You will indeed desire to see, but "shall not see" until you are "taken," and as eagles you meet me. "Then we shall see Him as He is," for "we shall be like Him." Then He tells us how He will be in His day. Vs. 24. For as the lightning that lighteneth out of one part

under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall the Son of Man be in his day. Let us examine the language carefully. There are two things mentioned – the cause and effect: lightning itself; and its effect – the shining light. The lightning is the electric fluid which human eye cannot discern; the flash of light we can see. Now which of these are used to illustrate the Son of man in his day? We answer that it is the electric fluid. The lightning which cannot be seen that is used to illustrate the Son of man. Electricity was almost unknown as a science when Jesus uttered these words, but it was written for our edification and instruction, and the Lord knew that His simile would have a force and meaning now, which the disciples then could not fully realize.

It is now known that electricity is one of the most powerful forces in nature; perhaps more powerful than any other, yet imperceptible to the eye. Scientists affirm that it can encircle this earth six times in one second of time.

What a wonderful illustration of the powers of the "Son of man in His days." Everywhere present, all powerful. Its presence may be recognized by the flashes which it causes, and both its presence and power are shown when that which it strikes falls crumbled to dust. Just so now, and during all the days of the Son of man, for we understand that all the "day of wrath" or time of trouble, is included in the term "in His days." In these days there will be great flashes of light and knowledge in the church, enlightening all who have eyes to see, and are awake and watching. Has not this been to a great extent your experience, since you came to recognize as a fact that the bridegroom

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various great, grand, bright revelations of God's plan contained in "the word," have been seen by you? Yes, I think that this is the experience of all; we have not seen Him, but the enlightening influence resulting from His presence, we have seen.

But the effect of lightning is different, in different places. It shines in the heavens, (the church,) but it is a very destructive agent on earth (to the world,) sometimes. So we understand during this, His day, the various high ones of earth will be smitten, crumbled and brought low, and "all the kingdoms of the whole world shall be thrown down."

Thus shall the Son of man be in his day. We recognize Him through the light upon the word, and the world shall recognize Him by the destruction and trouble. And they shall say, "hide us, (protect us,) for the great day of His wrath is come."
