

THE SIGN OF HIS PRESENCE.

The disciples ask, "What shall be the sign of Thy parousia, (presence, Emp. Dia.) and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3.) The first words of the recorded answer show the need of a sign. Take heed, let no man deceive you, for many shall come in My name saying, "I am Christ," and shall deceive many, (Vers. 4-5.) A sign will enable those who obey this injunction to discern between the false and the true.

Again, a sign will be needed because of the obscurity which marks the period of his return. His presence is not to be accompanied by such physical demonstrations as shall make all aware of it. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the presence of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the presence of the Son of man be, (Vers. 37-39.) All things will indeed continue as from the beginning. How then will the church be aware of His presence, except by a sign?

This sign will not be given to all. Only those can see it who have obeyed his commands, and these cannot show it to the unfaithful. They are the ones whose hearts are not overcharged with surfeiting and the cares of this life. Their hands are clean and their hearts pure. Paul calls them "children of the light," and says that because they are of the light, that day shall not overtake them as a thief. 1 Thess. 5:4.

We are now prepared to consider the nature of this sign. Christ describes it in answer to the question asked by His disciples, "What shall be the sign of Thy presence." He says: "Then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not, for there shall

arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, inasmuch, that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before, wherefore if they shall say unto you, behold, He is in the desert, go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chamber, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the presence of the Son of man be, (Matt. 24:23-28). This "lightning" cannot be natural light, else His presence would not be likened to the days that were before the flood. Spiritual light is divine truth. Hence a great and wonderful unfolding of truth is all that the bible gives us a right to expect during the presence of the Son of man, and before translation. Some teach that He may appear to us before we are made like Him. But we know not where the Bible gives us any warrant for such expectation. On the contrary it is written, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, (1 John 3:2). Again, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:4). Hence, we urge on those who are "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," the Saviour's command, "Take heed let no man deceive you." The light of truth made plain by the Spirit, is the only promised guide, while here we wait. And this to us, is far more convincing than any physical manifestation could be.

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