

PART III.

HOW WILL CHRIST COME?

TO ALL who "love his appearing" and have read with interest the foregoing chapter, the manner in which our Lord will come becomes a subject of great interest, and now invites your attention.

At his first advent he came in a body of flesh prepared "for the suffering of death:" at his second advent he comes in glory (Mark 13:26) in his glorious body (Phil. 3:21), a spiritual body. – 1 Cor. 15:44-49.

But 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 them that love him." To both of these propositions we assent, but believe we cannot find out by studying God's Word what he has not revealed; and our investigation will be confined to the Word. 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 believers – the church – "that we might know the things that are freely given to 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 [R261 : page 57] are very apt to change 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; a glory of

the earthly, as well as of the heavenly. The glory of the earthly, as we have seen, was lost by the first Adam's sin, and is to be restored to the race by Jesus and his bride during the Millennial reign. The glory of the heavenly is as yet unseen, except as revealed to the spiritual, "new creatures" – to the eyes of faith, by the Spirit, through the Word. They are distinct and separate. – 1 Cor. 15:38-48. We know what the natural, earthly, terrestrial 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 heavenly, celestial, spiritual body, – "That which is born of the spirit is spirit." But of what material a spiritual body may be we know not, for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but...we shall be like him" – Jesus.

THE SECOND BIRTH.

Jesus 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 now 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. 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, – i.e., 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 – at conversion – just as surely as a birth of the flesh is preceded by a begetting of the **[R261 : page 58]** 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. "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 Christ, after his

resurrection, and of angels, who are also spiritual bodies, gain general information with regard to spiritual bodies, thus "comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

First, then, angels can be, and frequently are, present, yet invisible. "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 begotten of the spirit, 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 Balaam the angel was invisible, the ass's 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 **[R261 : page 59]** sepulchre "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 [R262 : page 59] 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.

We have thus far found spiritual bodies truly glorious; yet, except by 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.

Jesus is a spiritual body since his resurrection. He was "raised a spiritual body," consequently the same powers which we find illustrated by angels – spiritual bodies, should be true also of him, and such was the case. If Jesus had revealed himself [R262 : page 60] to his disciples after his resurrection as the angel did to Daniel, the glory of the spiritual body would undoubtedly have been more than they, as earthly beings, could bear. They would probably have been so alarmed as to be unable to receive instructions. [We understand that the

glorifying, spoken of was accomplished after he ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High (Jno. 7:39), refers to the installation into the majesty of power. When the Scriptures speak of a glorious spiritual body, the glory, grandeur of the person is referred to, and not the glory of power or office.] 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, etc.

Remember that the object of Jesus' appearing to them was to convince them that "he who was dead is alive forevermore;" that they might go forth as "witnesses." Being a spiritual body, it was simply a question of expediency which way he could best appear to them – i.e., in which way would his object in appearing be best accomplished. He could appear as a "flame of fire," as the angel of the Lord had appeared to Moses "in the burning bush." Thus, Jesus might have appeared to and talked with the disciples, or he might have appeared in glory as the angel did to Daniel, or as he afterward did to John and to Saul of Tarsus. If he had so appeared, they would doubtless also have had "great fear and quaking," and would have fallen to the ground before him, and "become as dead men;" or he could do as angels had done, and as he had done with Abraham (Gen. 18) when he appeared as a man. This last he saw to be the best way, and he did appear as a man. But notice, they did not see him after his resurrection as before his death. First he appeared to Mary as the gardener, and she "saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus." "After that he appeared in **[R262 : page 61]** ANOTHER FORM unto two of them as they went into the country" (Mark 16:12). They knew not that it was Jesus until he revealed himself in breaking of bread; then he vanished from their sight. Notice, it was in "another form," and, consequently, not the same one in which he appeared to Mary.

Again, some having given up all hope of being any longer fishers of men, had gone again to their nets. They had toiled all night and caught nothing. In the morning Jesus is on the shore within speaking distance, but they "knew not that it was Jesus." It was another form. He works a miracle, giving them a boat-full of fish in a moment. John, the loving disciple, remembers the feeding of the three thousand and five thousand, the strange days in which they were living, and that Jesus had appeared to them already. He seems at once to discern who gave the draught of fishes and said: "It is the Lord." He recognized him not by the natural eye, but by the eye of faith, and when they were come to shore "None of them durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing (feeling sure from the miracle, for they saw not the point of the nails) that it was the Lord" (John 21:1). Thus did Jesus appear to his disciples at different times, to make of them witnesses of his resurrection. He was present, but unseen, during most of those forty days, appearing, in all, perhaps not more than seven times. – John 20:26, and 21:14.

We presume that it was to guard against the idea that he was a fleshly body that he appeared in various forms and in miraculous ways, coming into their midst, the doors being shut, and vanishing from their sight. He not only showed that he had undergone a change since death, but he illustrated his own teaching to Nicodemus, that every one born of the Spirit ("That born of the Spirit is Spirit") can go and come like the wind. "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (Jno. 3:8). So did Jesus go and come. "But some doubted" – some wanted to thrust their hands into his side, and put their fingers into the print of **[R262 : page 62]** the nails; and Jesus thus appeared. Whether it was the same body that had been crucified, or one like it, we know not, nor does it make any difference; in any case, it was not his body, for he had been "quickened of the Spirit" – a spiritual body – "sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body," and none of the various forms or bodies in which he appeared were his body. They were only veils of the flesh

which hid or covered the glorious spiritual body, just as angels had often used the human form to veil themselves when appearing to mortals.

One point which seems to confuse is, that Jesus ate and drank with the disciples and said, "Handle me, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Jesus affirms just what we have claimed, that the body they saw and handled, and which ate with them, was not his spiritual body, for he says: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones." Look back to the time when the Lord and two angels appeared to Abraham (Gen. 18). Jesus had not then left "the form of God," and taken the form of a servant. He was a spiritual body then, and it had not flesh and bones, but he then used the human form as a veil. He ate and drank and talked, and could have said to Abraham: Handle me; this body which you see is "flesh and bones." No, the disciples did not see Christ's glorious spiritual body, but they saw the fleshly "forms" in which he appeared.

St. Paul teaches us (1 Cor. 15:44,45) distinctly that Christ was raised from the dead a life-giving Spirit [pneuma, the same word used by our Lord]. But where did he get the various bodies in which he appeared, and where did they go when their work was accomplished? They did not see corruption; neither did those bodies which the angels used see corruption. Our only answer is, "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." But we all believe other things which we cannot fully understand. We cannot understand how a grain of wheat grows, yet we know it does grow; we know not how Jesus turned the water into wine, or healed the sick, or raised the dead. Yet we **[R262 : page 63]** believe that he did these things. Can you tell 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 sepulchre. 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 Jesus' spiritual body and those of angels glorious, yet invisible to mortals: with power to manifest the glory, or to appear as men, or in any form they may choose. In the resurrection the overcomers – the Bride – shall be "like unto Christ's glorious body." "We shall be like him, for (not until then) we shall see him as he is" (not as he was, 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 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 our Lord will never again appear as a man; that at his second coming he will be invisible to mankind; that none will ever see him except the Church: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" that the Church will not see him until changed from natural to spiritual bodies; that then "we shall see him as he is" [not as he was], for "we shall be like him" [not he like us, as at the first advent]. But, while none are to see him with their natural eyes, all are to recognize his presence and his power ("the eyes of their understanding being opened"). Hence we read: "Every eye shall see (optomai – recognize) him."

There will be, we understand, various orders and times of recognizing him by various classes of humanity. The first class to recognize his presence, the Bible teaches, will be those Christians who live in most intimate communication with him, and **[R262 : page 64]** who are the most separate from the world. These, by the eye of faith, through the word of truth, will recognize him as present. These, called "a little flock," the "overcomers," the Bride, etc., will be the first to be informed of his presence. We have a "sure word of prophecy,

whereunto ye do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day (of the Lord) dawn." "If thou shalt not watch,...thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." This "little flock" will be changed – made like unto Christ's glorious **[R263 : page 64]** body.

Then commences a time of trouble on the worldly-minded Church, and on the world, in which the Lord makes known his presence and power, by causing the overthrow of all systems of error, in Church and world.

Though all this uprooting and overturning of governments, etc., will be accomplished in a manner considered perfectly natural, yet it will be so thorough, that ultimately all will realize that "The Lord reigneth," for "he shall be revealed (made known) in flaming fire." (Judgments.) And in due time, "all that are in their graves" shall also be brought to life (during the Millennial age), and recognize Christ; for "Unto him every knee shall bow." Thus "every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him."

Now let us examine the subject more in detail.

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 shall see, 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. 15:25,26.

In the application of prophecy to the events of the first advent we recognize order. Christ must be the "child born and son **[R263 : page 65]** 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 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. – 1 Peter 1:11. 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 the 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 understand that this appearing of the saints in glory, as already expressed of the Lord, will be a manifestation not in person but in power.

We have 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 Archangel 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 in a manner visible to the natural eye, while the air is rent with the blast of the Archangel's trumpet, at which, mid reeling tombstones and opening graves the dead **[R263 : page 66]** will be resurrected. It certainly has that appearance on the surface, 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 see him, but – he shall come. When he arrives it will be privately. He comes to organize the Church as his kingdom, to set it 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, as he said, "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more."

And "he shall so come in like manner" – unknown to the world. Nor will they see (recognize) him in 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." As we will not be rewarded twice, nor resurrected twice, we conclude that the "Trump of God" (1 Thess. 4:16) and the "Last Trump" (1 Cor. 15:52) are the same, differently expressed.

The same events are mentioned as occurring at each – i.e., the resurrection and reward of saints. And for the same reason we believe the "Trump of God" and "Last Trump" to be the "Seventh Trump" of Rev. 11:15. 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 **[R263 : page 67]**

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 – the pouring out of the "seven vials" of his wrath – the "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation" – seems evident, for we are told, in the same sentence, of the wrath of God coming on the nations. – Rev. 11:15,18.

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 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." – John 20:19,26. But do not forget that only the Church are raised spiritual bodies – all others, natural fleshly bodies, as Lazarus, etc.

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 **[R263 : page**

68] 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 send 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 said: "Your house is left unto you 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 – by offering himself the true sacrifice. But the harvest or reaping done in the end of the Jewish age was confined to them as a people. The oracles of God had been committed to them as a people; wheat was sought among them, but as a nation they proved to be mainly chaff. The wheat was garnered (brought into the Gospel church) and the chaff burned (nation destroyed), and thus their harvest ended.

During the Gospel age, the church does not reap, but sows the seed. Paul plants, Apollos 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. – Matt. 13. 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,

relating to "the kingdom [R263 : page 69] of heaven" – the church – 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 from getting in among the wheat – hypocrites getting into the church, – (instance, 1 Cor. 5:3. – "Simon Magus" [R264 : page 69] – "Anannias 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 the 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." "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, yet an invisible presence and work. If the work of binding, gathering, etc., were a visible work by visible agents, two would not be found in the field, mill and bed when the hour for translation comes and the one is taken and the other left. – Matt. 24:41.

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," etc. – 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 [R264 : page 70] 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 – time of trouble.) The special point to which your attention is called, however, is the fact that this harvest will go on without outward demonstration, the chief and under-reapers being present but unseen.

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" – age. We refer to the personal presence which did go away, and was to 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, etc." and apokalupsis – rendered, shall be revealed in 2 Thes. 1:7. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed."

These and other texts teach us that our Lord will reveal or manifest himself to the world in such a manner that "Every eye shall see – [optomai – recognize] him" – "Be revealed in flaming fire,"

[judgments]. But what we now claim is, that before he is thus revealed, he will be present unseen, (by all except the Bride, who will see – recognize him – because of the eyes of her **[R264 : page 71]** understanding being opened by the anointing of truth – see Eph. 1:17-19), doing a work and gathering his Bride, or body, to himself.

We have Christ's own words to prove that he will be present in the world, and the world for a time will know not of it. In 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," the time of trouble coming upon the world. – Luke 21:36. There will be no outward demonstration, until the church is gathered, whenever that takes place – soon or in the distant future.

We think we have good solid reasons, not imaginations, nor dreams, nor visions, but Bible evidences that we are now "in the days

of the Son of Man:" that "the day of the Lord" has come, and Jesus, a spiritual body, is present, harvesting the Gospel age; yet, as he has said, the world seeth him no more; they [R264 : page 72] 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 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." 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." – Luke 21:34.

We have seen that in his days of presence it will be as it was in Noah's days – the world will know not. – Matt. 24:37; Luke 17:26. We are told that the day of the Lord is a day of trouble, a day of clouds, and thick darkness. – Zeph. 1:15; Joel 2:2. We are told also that "as the lightning which shineth," (not as the shining, but as the invisible electric fluid which causes the shining) "so shall the Son of Man be in his day." – Matt. 24:27; Luke 17:24. Now if he is to be as lightning, and his day a day of clouds, as the above texts assert, are they not in harmony? In the natural storm when we see flashes from lightning and hear peals of thunder, it gives evidence to us that atmospheric changes are taking place, and that the vitiated and corrupt "air" is to be changed, and we rejoice that it will be pure after the storm.

We now find a harmony in the account of our gathering. As we found "the voice of the archangel" and "the trump of God" were symbols of the closing epoch of this age and its troublous events, so now we find "the clouds" to symbolize the gathering of the trouble in

that epoch; "the lightning" to symbolize or illustrate our Lord's presence "in his day," and that "air" is used as the symbol of the spiritual throne from which Satan [R264 : page 73] ("the prince of the power of the air,") is to be deposed, and to which our Lord and his joint heirs are to come.

The great time of trouble, as a storm, has been, and continues gathering over earth. The air, in which Satan, "the prince of this world (age,) rules, becomes more and more vitiated until the storm breaks. The prince of darkness now works in the hearts of the children of disobedience to the accomplishment of his own will, viz., in oppressing and opposing justice and truth to the affliction of mankind. The clouds are gathering, and men's hearts are beginning to fail for fear of the approaching storm – "for fear of those things that are coming on the earth." Soon it will break in all its fury. But though it fills all hearts with fear and dread, in its final results it will prove a great blessing to the earth, (mankind,) displacing the present "powers of the air," ("powers of darkness," – "spiritual wickedness in high (controlling) places,") – and giving place to earth's rightful ruler – Jesus and his Bride, also spiritual beings (powers of the air.)

So, after the storm, shall the "Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings," and the kingdom of darkness shall give place to the kingdom of light, and mankind will rejoice in the pure air and cloudless sunlight of that perfect day.

Notice, also, that all the flashes of lightning come from among the clouds, and become more and more vivid as the storm increases. How the various Scriptures interpret each other: "As the lightning, so shall the Son of Man be in his day." "Behold he cometh with clouds." "The day of the Lord is a day of trouble, of clouds and thick darkness." "He maketh the clouds his chariot."

We conclude, then, that if "he cometh with clouds" of trouble, etc., we shall be "caught away in clouds" [diaglott] of the same sort,

after he has thus come. If prepared, we shall be caught to meet him during the gathering of the trouble, before the storm bursts.

David [anointed] was doubtless a type of the church in her **[R264 : page 74]** deliverance, as pictured in the song (2 Sam. 22,) in which he says (vs. 10): "He bowed the heavens also and came down and darkness was under his feet....He was seen upon the wings of the wind, and he made darkness his pavilions round about **[R265 : page 74]** him...and thick clouds of the skies....He sent forth and took me;...He delivered me from the strong enemy" [death]. – Luke 21:36. Yes, our Lord when he has come and made trouble and darkness his pavilion, takes his Bride – delivers her from the strong enemy of the fleshly nature, death, into the perfection of the new divine nature – like unto Christ's glorious body. Lord help us to be ready for the change that we may be thus "caught away."

"Forever with the Lord,
Amen, so let it be;
Life from the dead is in the word –
'Tis immortality."
