

THE MANNER OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

To all who love and look for our Lord's appearing, it is of utmost importance to be acquainted with the Scripture teaching as to the manner of his coming, that we may know how to expect him, remembering that Israel after the flesh stumbled over his first advent, because they had false ideas of the manner of his coming. Briefly stated, we believe the Scriptures to teach that Christ will not again as at the first advent appear in the flesh; for says Paul, (2 Cor. 5:16) "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him [so] no more." He is now the highly exalted spiritual being – a spiritual body (Phil. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:44) the express image of the Father's person." (Heb. 1:3.) We must not expect him then to reappear in the body which he took for sacrifice, but in his glorious body.

As a basis then for further investigation, we will 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, nor 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 – 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 following, 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 that are freely given unto us of God;" and in the last clause of v. 13, he gives us the rule by which we may know, viz: "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." We are very apt to

change this rule and compare spiritual things with natural, and thus get darkness instead of light. Let us, then, 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. 15:38-48.) We know what the fleshly – natural body is, for we now have such; it is flesh, blood and bones. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and since there are two kinds of bodies, we know that the spiritual must be different, and Jesus said that a spiritual body is not composed of flesh, and bones. (Luke 24:39.) It is a spiritual body, and "that which is born of the spirit is spirit." But as to what a spiritual body is made of, we know not. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we shall be like him," Christ. (1 John 3:2.)

Angels are spiritual bodies. Christ was raised from the dead a spiritual body. This was his second birth. First, he was 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] in 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 – to spiritual bodies by the resurrection, when we shall arise 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. When begotten of the flesh we are born of the flesh in the likeness of the first Adam, the earthly; but when begotten of the spirit at conversion, and born of the spirit in the resurrection, we shall be in the likeness of the heavenly, the second Adam. "As

we have borne the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Cor. 15:49.)

By examining facts recorded of angels, and of Christ after his resurrection we may gain some general information with regard to spiritual bodies: First we learn that 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.) Baalam's ass saw the angel on the way. (Num. 22:23.)

Second, angels can and have appeared as men. The Lord and two angels appeared as men to Abraham, who had supper prepared for them, of which they ate. (Gen. 18.) An angel appeared to Gideon as a man, but afterward made himself known. (Judges 6:12,22.) An angel appeared to Samson's mother and father; they thought him a man until he ascended up to **[R579 : page 6]** heaven in the flame of the altar. (Judges 13:20,21.)

Third, spiritual bodies are really bright and glorious in their normal condition: The countenance of the angel who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre "was like lightning." (Matt. 28:3.) Daniel in a vision saw a 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.) 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. (Acts 26:13; 1 Cor. 15:8.)

Thus we find spiritual bodies truly glorious; yet without a miracle, either 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, "the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but 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. (Dan. 10:7.) 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 had done, he appeared. Not only so, but he appeared in different bodies; as the gardener to Mary; "after that, he appeared to the two disciples as they went into the country" (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 and talked with them, then vanished out of their sight. He came and went, as invisibly as the wind; and they could not tell whence he came nor whither he went. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8.) 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,

and 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 bones, and it ate. The disciples did not see Christ's glorious spiritual body, but they saw him as he appeared in a fleshly body.

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 tell 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 that it grows. I know not how Christ turned the water into wine, 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 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 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 in this respect, and "like unto Christ's glorious body." Now bearing in mind that "though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more," after the flesh, with what we have learned of the powers of that spiritual body, we are now prepared to understand other statements relating to the manner of the second advent.

To John, on Patmos, Jesus said, "Behold I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments" etc. (Rev. 16:15.) He comes secretly and unknown to the world, but those

believers who are taking heed to the sure word of prophecy which shines as a light in a dark place (2 Pet. 1:19), shall, because of its light, not be in darkness that that day should overtake them as a thief. (1 Thes. 5:2-4.)

He comes "as a thief" for the church – the waiting virgins; both them "that sleep in Jesus" and those "who are alive and remain." This gathering time at his appearing is the harvest time of the Gospel Age, and as in the harvest of the Jewish Age, the prepared ones were gathered out to become co-workers with the Lord in introducing the new dispensation of the Gospel Age, so those who are found ready and watching at his second appearing, shall likewise discern his presence and become co-workers with him in introducing the new dispensation of the Millennial Age. And not only are these to be co-workers in introducing the new dispensation, but as soon as they learn of the special work of the hour, they are engaged with him in completing the harvest work.

But in all this change of dispensation the world will go on as usual. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming (Greek – parousia – presence); for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning." (2 Pet. 3:4.)

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. The second advent, as we have seen, lasts much longer. It includes the millennial reign, and as prophecy foretold the object, manner, etc., of the first advent, so it also covers all the prominent features of the second advent and reign. Christ 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 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. And 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 thousand of his saints." (Jude 14.) Again, we read – "The Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee." (Zech. 14:5). Thus we learn that when he appears in glory we are with him, and of course, we must be gathered to meet him before that.

We have further evidence to offer, proving that he comes unknown to the world; but attempt to answer the 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 every eye, while the air is rent with the blast of the archangel's trumpet; at which, amid reeling tombstones and opening graves the dead will come forth. It certainly has that appearance on the surface, and doubtless was

not intended to be rightly 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 see, but – he shall so come. When he arrives it will be privately. He comes to gather and to set up his kingdom. 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 we remember that Jesus said, "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me." (John 14:19.)

What, then, does the trumpet mean, if there is to be no open demonstration? Let us see. The church is to be rewarded "at the resurrection"; it surely will not be rewarded or resurrected more than once; hence we conclude 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 **[R580 : page 6]** and the prophets and saints rewarded. Then the "Seventh Trump" is the "Trump of God," and the "Last Trump."

There is a series of these trumpets evidently the same in kind, but what? "The seventh angel sounded." A sound on the air? No, no more than the six which preceded it. They are each said to sound, and Sir Isaac Newton, Clark, 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 God's wrath, and 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 [R580 : page 7] 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.

The world will not see the saints when gathered or gathering. When changed (in the twinkling of an eye) to spiritual bodies, like unto Christ's glorious body, they will be as invisible as he and as angels. The world will not see the graves open and the tombstones thrown down, for a spiritual body is not of the earth, earthy. But do not forget that only the church is to be raised spiritual bodies. All others are to have a restitution, a restoration to the original human perfection.

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, he called a harvest. It was the harvesting of the Jewish age. Christ was present as the chief reaper, and his disciples as under-reapers. Their work was the gathering of 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 have labored [the prophets] and ye are entered into their labors" (John 4:38). That work was not general, nor for the world. Jesus confined their labors to Judea, and the work to them did not entirely cease until the end of their harvest A.D. 70. But after his resurrection Jesus sent the disciples to "preach the Gospel to every nation." But this was no longer a harvesting but a seed sowing: 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. 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 declares that the mystery of iniquity had begun to work even in his day. Now they grow side by side in all churches. Shall we separate them, Lord? No; we might make some mistakes and 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, '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 must come a time, then, in the end of this age, when the reapers will be doing some sort of a separating work in the church. That we are now in this harvest we have abundant proof, and yet, as in the harvest of the Jewish age, the mass of the church and the world are wholly unconscious of it. The separating work is accomplished in both cases by the sharp sickle of truth and the spirit of sacrifice.

Some may have confounded these remarks concerning the presence of Christ as a spiritual being 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 presence by his spirit he said: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." We refer to the personal presence, which did go away, and will come again, – a spiritual body. (John 14:3.)

The Greek word *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" – and *apokalupsis* – rendered, shall be revealed. (2 Thes. 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 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, doubtless were, and may be similarly wicked now, in his presence, but wickedness is not the point of comparison. As then they ate, drank, married – proper enough things to be doing, not sinful, so shall it be in Christ's presence, they will attend to the usual avocations of life unconscious of his presence, the harvest and change of dispensation. 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 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, nor with the little flock "accounted worthy to escape the great tribulation." Watch therefore and take heed to the sure word of prophecy as unto a light in a dark place, that knowing of his presence and the changes then due, you may be found in harmony with the king, working wisely in his vineyard, that you and your labor may be approved of him.

Forget not the Master's words: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unaware. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore and pray

always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:34-36.)
