

Ver., "shall in no wise precede." *Prevent* is here used in its old meaning, "to go before." The meaning is that those of us who are living at the Lord's coming will not have any higher privilege than those who have died.

16. For the Lord himself. Not by messenger, or even by his Spirit, but in his own visible person. **Shall descend from heaven.** Returning to the earth from which he ascended after his resurrection, and fulfilling the promise of Acts 1. 11. **With a shoutvoice....trump.** "In my judgment these three words refer to the same event, the trumpet-call to the living and the dead, sounded by the archangel as the Lord's herald." **The archangel.** Literally, "chief angel:" the head of the angelic order, as the high-priest was the head of the priestly. What may be his name and his nature no man knoweth. **Trump of God.** The vocal symbol of the divine presence, as the glory is its visible symbol. It was heard when the Lord came to declare his law at Sinai (Exod. 19. 16-19), and it will be heard once more when he comes to usher in the judgment. **The dead in Christ.** Those who have died believing in Jesus. **Shall rise first.** The general resurrection is not here referred to. Paul means that the sleeping saints shall be raised before the living saints shall be changed.

17. We which are alive. Again uniting himself with the Church, which lives while its successive generations pass away. **Which remain.** Who are left upon the earth at the coming of the Lord. **Shall be caught up.** He passes over the change to a celestial body (1 Cor. 15. 52, 53), after which the saints will be borne up to the heavenly spaces. **Together with them.** The transformed living, together with the resurrected dead, and both with their redeeming Lord. **In the clouds.** In the air, as below; for the resurrection body will be like that of the risen Saviour, under the absolute control of the spirit. **To meet the Lord.** It is significant that Paul does not say, "to meet each other," for doubtless in that hour will be many glad reunions; yet infinitely more glad will be the meeting with the Lord. **Ever with the Lord.** We shall see him face to face; shall enjoy the fulness of communion with him; and shall enjoy it forever. **5. The greatest joy of heaven will be its eternal union with its King.**

18. Comfort one another. The comfort was to be given to those in sorrow for the loss of friends; and it consisted, 1. In the certainty of resurrection; 2. In the certainty of the Lord's coming; 3. In the certainty of an eternal life with Christ; 4. In the certainty of a heavenly meeting.

1, 2. But. The apostle now takes up another phase of the same subject. **The times and the seasons.** The first word denotes the general periods, the second the special points of time. **No need.** As the apostle had already informed them, in his brief ministry at Thessalonica, that these things were unknown. **The day of the Lord.**

The day when the Lord appears. **So cometh.** The present tense is used, as the event is to be considered as ever impending. **As a thief in the night.** A comparison first used by the Lord himself, and thence the standard illustration employed in many of the epistles. It points to the sudden, unexpected, and unwelcome coming of Christ to the world at large; a coming, too, which will rob them of their all, and leave them poor indeed.

3. When they. Not *we*, the waiting Church, but *they*, the unbelieving world. **Shall say.** Rev. Ver., "are saying." **Peace and safety.** Saying it in their careless thoughts and lives, rather than in words. **Sudden destruction.** The blasting of all their hopes, the consciousness of failure, and the despair of salvation. **Travail.** The sudden and sharp agony of pain, coming at the appointed hour, but without warning. **Not escape.** Plainly indicating that at the Lord's coming not all the world will be converted.

4. Ye, brethren. The believers in Christ, enlightened by the Gospel. **Are not in darkness.** They knew not the time of the Saviour's coming, but they knew its signs, were prepared for it in character, and could welcome its approach. **6. Happy state of those whose hearts would welcome their Lord at any moment! Overtake you.** Not as a thief is overtaken by the officer, but as a robber suddenly comes upon an unsuspecting family.

5, 6. Children of light. Rev. Ver., "sons of light." Belonging to the light, in the enjoyment of its privileges, and living the life which it commends. **Children** (Rev. Ver., "sons") of the day. With such deeds as need not be hidden. **Let us not sleep.** Let us keep the spiritual insight of faith clear and strong, and our hearts alert and eager for the coming of the King. **Watch.** Against error, sin, and temptation. **Be sober.** Spoken both literally and figuratively, warning against sins of intemperance and sinful indulgence, and against a dull and careless condition of mind.

7, 8. They that sleep. The world at large is like men asleep; Christians like men awake and alert. **Drunken in the night.** Anciently it was considered the depths of profligacy and degradation to be intoxicated in the day-time. **Let us who are.** (Rev. Ver., "Since we are," etc.) **Breastplate.** The coat of mail, covering the breast and shoulders. **Faith and love.** Nothing will better defend us against temptation than faith in Christ, and a warm love to him. **Helmet.** Armour for the head. **Hope of salvation.** Lifting up our faces toward heaven.

GOLDEN TEXT.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.—1 Thess. 4. 14.

OUTLINE.

1. The Light of Prophecy, v. 13-3.
2. The Children of Light, v. 4-8.