

It must be supposed, then, that the preliminary events have occurred. All the seals have been opened ;—all the trumpets have been blown ;—all the vials have been poured out ; all the visions of the Apocalypse, the various, obscure and conflicting metaphors, which have exhausted the efforts of the mightiest minds of Christendom to explain them, have been fulfilled. The time of the consummation has come. The transaction of affairs of all kinds is going on as usual ; no uncommon tokens of divine manifestations have been presented to notice, except, it may be, some remarkable displays of power in missionary stations, such as have gladdened God's people for many years, and occasioned a revival of that watching, waiting state of mind which is evidently agreeable to the Lord's will.

1. On some wondrously bright morning all eyes are turned to the appearance of a cloud unlike all other clouds, gradually covering the hemisphere, and moving towards the earth. The Lord is there, with his escort of "mighty angels," coming to wind up all affairs, and "make all things new." He is not seen as yet but his presence is felt, and consciousness of the fact begins to spread among God's servants, producing ecstatic joy, while others are filled with trembling apprehension, crying "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" [Rev. vi. 17.]

2. There will be a "great sound of a trumpet," and forthwith squadrons of angels will leave the clouds in every direction, whose mission will be to raise the "dead in Christ," and gather in God's elect "from one end of the heaven to the other." This will be "the first resurrection," the event so termed in Rev. xx. as has been already remarked, is clearly of a spiritual kind, one of those highly-wrought figures with which the Apocalypse abounds. It is Christ's prerogative to raise the dead, and he employs the instrumentality of angels for that purpose. We must not omit, however, to observe, that the bodies which will be raised will be spiritual bodies ; there will be nothing fleshly about them, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," [1 Cor. xv. 50.] We do not know what a "spiritual body" is ; but we shall "know hereafter."

3. This being done, the saints then living in the world will be prepared to meet the Lord. They will not die, but they will be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" [1 Cor. xv. 52] for Christ shall "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own