

The Manner of Christ's Return and Appearing.

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Berean Bible Institute
PO Box 402
Rosanna 3084
Australia

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE
~~19 Fitzroy Place,~~
Kew, E 4
Melbourne - - Australia

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IN order to appreciate the Bible teachings as a whole it is absolutely necessary that we have clear views both of the object of our Lord's second coming, and of the manner in which He will be revealed. The object of His coming is to reconcile "whosoever will" of the world, to God, by a process of ruling, and teaching, and disciplining, called judging and blessing and the student must hold clearly in mind the object while studying the manner of our Lord's return. This is needful as an offset to the erroneous views, based upon false ideas of both the object and the manner of our Lord's coming.

Grasp and hold in mind as firmly as possible the fact that God's plan is one harmonious whole, which is being wrought out through Christ; and that the work of the second advent stands related to the work of the first as effect to cause: That is, that the great work of Restitution at the second advent follows the work of Redemption accomplished at the first advent as a logical sequence according to the divine plan. Therefore the Lord's return is the dawn of hope for the world, the time for the bestowment of the favours secured by the redemption—the Gospel Age being merely an intervening parenthesis, during which the bride of Christ is selected, to be associated with her Lord in the great work of restitution which He comes to accomplish.

And since the Church of Christ, which has been developing during the Gospel age, is to be associated with her Lord in the great restitution work of the Millennial age, the first work of Christ at the second advent must be the gathering of His elect Church, to which reference is made through the Prophet (Psa. 50:5), saying, "Gather my saints together unto me—those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." This harvest period not only accomplishes the separation of wheat from tares in the nominal Gospel church, and the gathering and glorification of the wheat class,

but it is also to accomplish the burning (destruction) of the tares (as tares, or imitation wheat—not as individuals: the fire of destruction is symbolic as well as the tares), and the gathering and destruction of the corrupt fruitage of “the Vine of the earth” (human ambition, greed and selfishness), which has been growing and ripening for centuries in the kingdoms of this world and in the various civil and social organisations among men.

While our Lord’s return is a personal coming, let us again guard the student against confusion of thought in considering the two apparently conflicting expressions of our Lord—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (*aionos*, age), and, “I go to prepare a place for you, . . . and will come again and receive you.” (Matt. 28:20; John 14:2, 3.) The following incident will serve as an illustration of the harmony of the two promises:—One friend said to another as they were about to part, Remember, I will be with you through all your journey. How? Certainly not in person; for there they took trains to go in opposite directions to distant points. The idea was that in love, and thought, and care one for another, they would not be separated. In a similar yet fuller sense, the Lord has always been with His Church, His divine power enabling Him to oversee, direct and assist them, from first to last. But we are now considering, not our Lord’s presence with us in this figurative sense, but the manner of His second personal presence and appearing, “when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe in that day.”

The Scriptures teach that Christ comes again to reign; that He must reign until He has put down all enemies—all opponents, all things in the way of the great restitution which He comes to accomplish—the last to be overthrown being death (1 Cor. 15:25, 26); and that He will reign for a thousand years. It is therefore only as should be expected, that we find a much larger space in prophecy devoted to the second advent and its thousand years of

triumphant reign and overthrow of evil than to the thirty-four years of the first advent for redemption. And as we find that prophecy touches the various important points of those thirty-four years, from Bethlehem and Nazareth to the gall and vinegar, the parted raiment, the cross, the tomb and the resurrection, so we see that prophecy likewise touches various points of the thousand years of the second presence, particularly their beginning and ending.

The second presence of our Lord will cover a much longer period of time than the first. The mission of His first advent was finished in less than thirty-four years, while it will require a thousand years to accomplish the appointed work of His second presence. And thus it may be seen at a glance that, while the work of the first advent was no less important than that of the second advent—yea, though it was so important that the work of the second advent could never have been possible without it—yet it was not so varied, and hence required less description than the work of the second advent.

In considering the second advent we must not, any more than at the first advent, expect all prophecies to mark one particularly eventful moment of our Lord's arrival and to call the attention of all men to the fact of His presence. Such is not God's usual method: such was not the case at the first advent. The first advent of Messiah was not marked by any sudden or surprising demonstration, out of the usual order of things, but it was manifested and proven by the gradual fulfilment of prophecy showing to thoughtful observers that the events which should be expected were being accomplished on time. And thus it would be at His second advent. It is of less importance that we discover the exact moment of His arrival than that we discern the fact of His presence when He has arrived, even as at the first advent it was important to be able to recognise His presence, and the sooner the better, but much less important to know the exact date of His birth. In considering the second advent, the act of coming and the moment of arrival are too frequently the thought,

whereas it should be thought of as a period of presence, as was the first advent. The precise moment at which that persence would begin would then seem less important, and His object and work during the period of His presence would receive the greater consideration.

We must bear in mind, also, that our Lord is no longer a human being; that as a human being He gave Himself a ransom for men, having become a man for that very purpose. (1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 10:4, 5; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22.). He is now highly exalted, to the divine nature. Therefore Paul said, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now, henceforth, know we him [so] no more." (2 Cor. 5:16.) He was raised from the dead a life-giving spirit being (1 Cor. 15:45), and not a man, of the earth earthy. He is no longer human in any sense or degree; for we must not forget that natures are separate and distinct. Since He is no longer in any sense or degree a human being, we must not expect Him to come again as a human being, as at the first advent. His second coming is to be in a different manner, as well as for a different purpose.

Noting the fact that our Lord's change from human to divine nature at His resurrection was even a greater change than the one which occurred some thirty-four years previously, when He laid aside the glory of spiritual being and "was made flesh," we may with great profit consider very minutely His every action during the forty days after His resurrection before He went "to the Father"; because it is the resurrected Jesus of those forty days who is to come again, and not the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself as our ransom, in death. He who was put to death a flesh being was also in His resurrection quickened [made alive] a spirit being.—1 Pet. 3:18.*

In this passage, the words "in the" and "by the" are arbitrarily supplied by the translators, and are misleading. The Greek reads simply,—"Put to death flesh, quickened spirit."* Our Lord was put to death a fleshly or human being, but was raised from the dead a spirit being. And since the Church is to be *"changed"* in order that she may be like Christ, it is

At His second advent He does not come to be subject to the powers that be, to pay tribute to Caesar and to suffer humiliation, injustice and violence; but He comes to reign, exercising all power in heaven and in earth. He does not come in the body of His humiliation, a human body, which He took for the suffering of death, inferior to His former glorious body (Heb. 2:9); but in His glorious spiritual body, which is "the express image of the Father's person" (Heb. 1:3); for, because of His obedience even unto death, He is now highly exalted to the divine nature and likeness, and given a name above every name—the Father's name only excepted. (Phil. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:27.) The Apostle shows that it "doth not yet appear" to our human understanding what He is now like; hence we know not what we shall be like when made like Him, but we (the Church) may rejoice in the assurance that we shall one day be with Him and like Him, and see Him as He is (1 John 3:2)—not as He was at His first advent in humiliation, when He had laid aside His former glory and for our sakes had become poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.

If we consider the wisdom and prudence of our Lord's methods of manifesting His presence to His disciples after His resurrection, as well as previously, it may help us to remember that the same wisdom will be displayed in His methods of revealing Himself at His second advent, both to the Church and to the world—methods not necessarily similar, but in each case well suited to His object, which never is to alarm or excite men, but to convince their cool, calm judgments of the great truths to be impressed upon them. Our Lord's first advent was not a startling, exciting or alarming event. How quietly

evident that the change which occurred in the Head was of a kind similar to that described as in reservation for the overcomers, who shall be changed from human to spiritual nature, and made like him—"partakers of the divine nature." Hence, the following description of the change of the saints is applicable also to their Lord; *viz.*—"It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

and unobtrusively He came! So much so that only those who had faith and humility were enabled to recognise in the infant of humble birth, in the man of sorrows, in the friend of the humble and poor, and finally in the crucified one, the long-looked-for Messiah.

After His resurrection, the manifestation of His presence would in the nature of the case be a more astounding fact, particularly when His changed nature is taken into consideration. Yet the fact of His resurrection, together with the fact of His changed nature, had to be fully manifested, not to all the world at that time, but to chosen witnesses who would give credible testimony of the fact to succeeding generations. Had all the world been made acquainted with the fact then, the testimony coming down to our day would probably have been much less trustworthy, being coloured and warped by men's ideas and mixed with their traditions, so that the truth might appear almost or quite incredible. But God entrusted it only to chosen, faithful and worthy witnesses; and as we notice the account, let each mark how perfectly the object was accomplished, and how clear, positive and convincing was the proof of Christ's resurrection and change offered to them. Mark, too, the carefulness with which He guarded against alarming or unduly exciting them while making manifest and emphasising these great truths. And be assured that the same wisdom, prudence and skill will be displayed in His methods of making known the fact of His glorious presence at His second advent. The cool, calm judgment will be convinced in every case, though the world in general will need to be brought by severe discipline to the proper attitude to receive the testimony, while those whose hearts are right will have the blessed intelligence sooner. All the proofs of His resurrection and change to spiritual nature were not given to His disciples at once, but as they were able to bear them and in the manner calculated to make the deepest impression.

During the three and a half years of our Lord's ministry, His disciples had sacrificed friends, reputation, business, etc., to devote time and energy to heralding Messiah's presence and the establishment of His kingdom. But they had necessarily crude ideas regarding the manner and time of their Master's exaltation, and of their promised exaltation with Him. Nor was full knowledge then necessary: it was quite sufficient that they should faithfully take each step as it became due; hence the Master taught them little by little as they were able to receive it. And near the close of His ministry He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . and show you things to come, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—John 16:12, 13; 14:26.

Who can tell their great disappointment, even though so far as possible they had been armed against it, when they saw Him suddenly taken from them and ignominiously crucified as a felon—Him whose kingdom and glory they had been expecting and declaring, and which only five days before His crucifixion had seemed to them so near a realisation. (John 12:1, 12-19.). Though they knew Him to be falsely accused and wrongfully crucified, this did not alter the fact that their long cherished national hopes of a Jewish king, who would restore their nation to influence and power, together with their own individual hopes, ambitions and air-castles of important offices and high honours in the kingdom, were all suddenly demolished by this unfavourable turn which matters had taken in the crucifixion of their king.

Well did the Master know how desolate and aimless and perplexed they would feel; for thus it was written by the Prophet, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." (Zech. 13:7; Mark 14:27.). And during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, it was therefore His chief concern to gather them again, and to re-establish their

faith in Him as the long-looked-for Messiah, by proving to them the fact of His resurrection, and that since His resurrection, though retaining the same individuality, He was no longer human, but an exalted spirit being, having "all power in heaven and in earth."—Matt. 28:18.

He broke the news of His resurrection gradually to them—first, through the women (Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, Mary the mother of James and Salome, and others with them—Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1, 10), who came early to the sepulcher to anoint His dead body with sweet spices. While they wondered whom they should get to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher, behold, there was an earthquake, and when they came they found the stone rolled away, and an angel of the Lord sat upon it, who addressed them saying, "Fear not, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him."—Matt. 28:5-7.

It seems that Mary Magdalene separated from the other women and ran to tell Peter and John (John 20:1, 2), while the others went to tell the rest of the disciples, and that after she had left them Jesus appeared to the other women on the way, saying (Matt. 28:9, 10), "All hail." And they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him. Then said Jesus unto them, "Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee [their home], and there shall they see me." And with fear and joy they ran to tell the other disciples. In their mingled feeling of surprise, perplexity, joy and fear, and their general bewilderment, they scarcely knew how to report their strange and wonderful experience. When Mary met Peter and John she said sadly, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." (John 20:2.). The other women told how at the sepulcher they had seen a vision of angels who said He was

alive (Luke 24:22, 23), and then how they afterward met the Lord in the way.—Matt. 28:8, 10.

The majority of the disciples evidently regarded their story merely as superstitious excitement, but Peter and John said, We will go and see for ourselves; and Mary returned to the sepulcher with them. All that Peter and John saw was that the body was gone, that the grave clothes were carefully folded and laid by, and that the stone was rolled away from the door. So in perplexity they turned away, though Mary still remained there weeping. As she wept she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher and saw two angels, who said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." And as she turned about she saw Jesus standing, but did not know Him. He inquired, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" And she, supposing him to be the gardener, answered, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Then, in the old familiar tone which she quickly recognised, the Lord said, "Mary!"

That was enough to establish her faith in the statement of the angel, that He had risen, which until now had seemed like a dream or an idle tale; and in her joy she exclaimed, "Master!" Her first impulse was to embrace Him, and to tarry in His presence. But Jesus gently informed her that there was a very important mission for her to perform now, in bearing witness to the fact of His resurrection, and that she should be in haste to carry the message and establish the faith of the other disciples, still in perplexity and uncertainty, saying, "Touch [*Greek, haptomai*, embrace] me not [do not tarry for further demonstration of your affection now]; for I am not yet ascended to my Father [I will be with you for a short time yet]: but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." (John 20:17.) Through the other women also He had sent them word that He would meet them in Galilee.

Next, He overtook two of the sad and perplexed disciples as they walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and inquired the cause of their sadness and despondency. (Luke 24:13-35). And one of them answered: "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and has not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done. [Here they were probably calling to mind John 2:19, 21, 22.] Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher. And when they found not his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not."

No wonder they were perplexed; how strange it all seemed! how peculiar and thrilling had been the events of the past few days!

Then the stranger preached them a stirring sermon from the prophecies, showing them that the very things which had so disheartened them were the things which the prophets had foretold concerning the true Messiah: that before He could rule and bless and lift up Israel and all the world, He must first redeem them with His own life from the curse of death, which came upon all through Adam, and that afterward, raised to life and glory by Jehovah, their Master would fulfil all that was written by the prophets concerning His future glory and honour, as truly as He had fulfilled those prophecies which foretold His sufferings, humiliation and death. A wonderful preacher! and a wonderful sermon was that! It started new ideas and opened new expectations and hopes. As they drew near the village

they constrained Him to tarry with them, as it was toward evening and the day was far spent. He went in to tarry with them; and as He sat at meat with them, He took bread and brake and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened; and He vanished out of their sight.

Not until that moment did they recognise Him, though they had walked, and talked and sat at meat together. He was known to them not by face, but in the simple act of blessing and breaking bread in the old familiar way, thus assuring their faith in what they had already heard—that He had risen, and would see them again.

Then the two surprised and overjoyed disciples arose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem, saying to each other. "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Arriving in Jerusalem they found the others rejoicing also, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." And they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread. Probably they were nearly all there that evening, homes, business and everything else forgotten—Mary Magdalene with her tears of joy, saying, I knew Him the moment He called my name—I could not credit the angel's assurance of His resurrection until then; and the other women telling their wonderful experience of the morning, and how they had met Him in the way. Then Simon had His story to tell; and now here were two other witnesses from Emmaus. What an eventful day! No wonder they desired to meet together on the first day of every week after that to talk the matter over and to call to mind all the circumstances connected with this wonderful event of the Lord's resurrection, and to have their hearts "burn" again and again.

While the excited and overjoyed little company were thus met and relating to each other their several experiences, the Lord Jesus Himself suddenly stood in their midst (Luke 24:36-49) and said, "Peace be

unto you!" From where had He come? All such meetings were held secretly with closed doors, for fear of the Jews (John 20:19,26), but here was a sudden appearance without any visible approach; and they were terrified, and supposed they had seen a spirit. Then He comforted them, told them to calm their fears, and showed them His hands and His feet, saying, "It is I, myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, "Have ye here any meat?" and they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and He took it and did eat before them. Then He opened their understanding, their mental eyes, and expounded the Scriptures to them, showing from the law and the prophets that these things had come to pass exactly as foretold. But Thomas was absent (John 20:24); and when the other disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, he would not believe it, but said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Eight days passed without further manifestations, and they had time calmly to think and talk over the experiences of that wonderful day, when, the disciples being again assembled as before, Jesus stood in their midst, just as on the first evening, saying, "Peace be unto you." (John 20:26). This time Thomas was present, and the Lord addressed him, saying, "Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." He thus showed that He knew what Thomas had said without being told, and He gave that proof of His resurrection which Thomas had said would satisfy him; and with joy Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God!"

AFTER this, there must have been quite a long interval before there was any further manifestation of the Lord's presence, and the disciples who were Galileans began to think of home and the future; and remembering the Lord's message by the

women, that He would go before them into Galilee, they went thither. Probably on their way, the Lord met them, as Matthew relates, in a mountain. They were perplexed; they no longer felt the same familiarity they once had toward Him; He seemed so greatly changed since His crucifixion from what He used to be—He appeared and disappeared in such peculiar times and places; He no longer seemed like "the man Christ Jesus;" so Matthew says "they worshipped Him—but some doubted." After a few words with them the Lord "vanished" from their sight, and left them to wonder what next would happen. For some time after their return to Galilee nothing unusual occurred, and there was no further indication of the Lord's presence. Doubtless they met together and talked over the situation, and wondered why He did not appear to them more frequently.

As they waited, the days and the weeks seemed long. They had long ago given up the ordinary pursuits of life, to follow the Lord from place to place, learning of Him, and preaching to others, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 10:5-7). They did not now wish to go back to the old pursuits; and yet, how should they proceed with the Lord's work? They comprehended the situation clearly enough to know that they could no longer preach as formerly the kingdom at hand; for all the people knew that their Master and King had been crucified, and none but themselves knew of His resurrection. While all of the eleven were thus perplexed and anxious, waiting for something, they knew not what, Peter said, Well, it will not do to remain idle: I will go back to my old fishing business; and six of the others said, We will do the same: we will go with you. (John 21:3.) And probably the rest also turned again to their old employments.

Who can doubt that the Lord was invisibly present with them many times as they talked together, overruling and directing the course of circumstances, etc., for their highest good? If they should have great success and become swallowed up by interest in business, they would soon be unfit for the higher

service; yet if they should have no success, it would seem like forcing them; so the Lord adopted a plan which taught them a lesson such as He often teaches His followers, viz.: that the success or failure of their efforts, in any direction, He can control if He please.

The old firm of fishermen reorganised: got together their boats, nets, etc., and went out for their first catch. But they toiled all night and caught no fish, and began to feel disheartened. In the morning a stranger on shore calls to them to know of their success. Poor success! We have caught nothing, they answer. Try again, said the stranger. Now cast your net on the other side of the boat. No use, stranger, we have tried both sides all night long, and if there were fish on one side, there would be on the other. However, we will try again and let you see. They did so, and got an immense haul. How strange! said some; but the quick and impressionable John at once got the correct idea, and said Brethren, the Lord only could do this. Don't you remember the feeding of the multitudes, etc.? That must be the Lord on shore, and this is another way that He has chosen to manifest Himself to us. Don't you remember that it was just so when the Lord first called us? Then, too, we had toiled all night and caught nothing until He called to us, saying, "Let down your nets for a draught." (Luke 5:4-11). Yes, surely that is the Lord, though, since His resurrection, we cannot recognise Him by His appearance. He now appears in a variety of forms; but we know each time that it is He by some peculiar circumstance like this, calling to mind some marked incident of our past acquaintance with Him.

And when they got to shore they found that Jesus had bread as well as fish, and they learned the lesson, that under His direction and care and in His service they would not be left to starve. (Luke 12:29, 30.) They did not ask Him if He were the Lord; for on this as on other occasions, the eyes of their understanding being opened, they knew Him, not by physical sight, but by the miracle. Then followed the instructions of that delightful hour, re-assuring

Peter of His continued acceptance notwithstanding His denial of the Lord, for which he repented and wept. He now learned afresh of his Master's love, and of his continued privilege of feeding the sheep and the lambs. We seem to hear the Lord say, You need not go back to the fishing business, Peter: I called you once to be a fisher of men, and, knowing your heart to be still loyal and zealous, I renew your commission as a fisher of men.

"And, eating together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the holy spirit not many days hence." (Acts 1:6—margin.) So they came to Jerusalem as instructed, and here it was forty days after His resurrection, that He met with them for the last time and talked with them. They summoned courage this time to question Him about the kingdom He had promised them saying, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" This thought of the kingdom was the one uppermost in the mind of every Jew. Israel, they understood, was to be chief among the nations under Messiah, and they knew not of the long Times of the Gentiles, and they saw not yet that the chief blessing had been taken from fleshly Israel (Matt. 21: 43; Rom. 11:7), and that they themselves were to be members of the new (spiritual) Israel, the royal priesthood and holy nation, through whom, as the body of Christ, the blessing of the world would come. They as yet understood none of these things. How could they? They had not yet received the holy spirit of adoption as sons but were still under condemnation; because, though the ransom-sacrifice had been made by the Redeemer, it had not yet been formally presented on our behalf in the Most Holy, even Heaven itself. (John 7:39.) Hence our Lord did not attempt any explanatory answer to their question, but merely said, "It is not for you [now] to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his

own power. But ye shall receive power* after that the holy spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts 1:7, 8.

Then the Lord, who was walking with them, when they reached the Mount of Olives, lifted His hands and blessed them, and He was parted from them and went upward; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (Luke 24: 48-52; Acts 1:6-15.) They began to see something more of God's plan now. The Lord who came down from heaven had returned to the Father, as He had told them before He died;—had gone to prepare a place for them and would come again and receive them;—had gone afar to receive the promised kingdom, and to return (Luke 19:12); and meantime they were to be His witnesses in all the earth to call and make ready a people to receive Him when He would come to be glorified in His saints, and to reign King of kings and Lord of lords. They saw their new mission, of proclaiming to every creature a coming king from heaven, "with all power in heaven and in earth," to be a much more important work than that of the preceding years, when they heralded "the man Christ Jesus," and followed Him who was "despised and rejected of men." Their risen Lord was changed indeed, not only in His personal appearance—appearing sometimes in one way and place, and again in a different way and place, manifesting His "all power"—but He was changed in condition or nature also. No longer did He appeal to the Jews, nor show Himself to them; for since His resurrection none saw Him in any sense except His friends and followers. His words, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more," were thus verified.

*This promised power to know and to understand times and seasons, and all things pertaining to a proper witnessing, applies to the whole Church from first to last; and under the guidance and power of the holy spirit, meat in due season concerning every feature of the plan is provided, in order that we may be His witnesses, even to the end of this age.—Compare John 16:12, 13.

Thus was the faith of the apostles and of the early Church established in the fact of the Lord's resurrection. Their doubts were scattered, and their hearts rejoiced; and they returned to Jerusalem and continued in prayer and supplication and study of the Scriptures, waiting for the adoption promised by the Father, and their endowment with spiritual understanding, and with special miraculous gifts of power, to enable them to convince true Israelites, and to establish the Gospel Church, at the day of Pentecost.—Acts 1:14; 2:1.

Though our Lord at His second advent will not manifest His presence in the same way that He did during those forty days after His resurrection, yet we have His assurance that the "brethren shall not be in darkness." Nay, more: we shall have an aid which they could not and did not have to help them during those forty days, viz., "power from on high," to guide us into the understanding of every truth due to be understood, and, even as promised, to show us things to come. Hence in due season we shall have full understanding of the manner, time and attendant circumstances of His appearing, which, if carefully watched for and marked, will be no less convincing than were the evidences of our Lord's resurrection furnished to the early Church, although of a different kind.

That our Lord at His second advent could assume the human form, and thus appear to men, as He did to His disciples after His resurrection, there can be no question; not only because He thus appeared in human form during those forty days, but because spirit beings have in the past manifested the power to appear as men in flesh and in various forms. But such manifestations would be out of harmony with the general tenor of God's plan, as well as out of harmony with the Scriptural indications given, relative to the manner of His manifestation, as we shall see. Instead, it is the Lord's plan that His spiritual kingdom shall communicate, operate, and manifest its presence and power through human, earthly agencies.

Just as the prince of this world, Satan, though unseen by men, exercises a wide influence in the world through those subject to him, and possessed of and controlled by his spirit, so the new Prince of Peace, the Lord, will chiefly operate in, and manifest His presence and power through, human beings, subject to Him and possessed of and controlled by His spirit.

Seeing with the natural eye and hearing with the natural ear are not all there is of seeing and hearing. "No man hath seen God at any time" thus, yet all God's children have seen Him, and known Him, and held communion with Him. (John 1: 18; 5:37; 14:7.) We hear God's call, our "high calling," we hear the voice of our Shepherd, and are constantly looking unto Jesus, and see the prize, the crown of life which He promises—not by natural sight and hearing, but by our understanding. Far more precious is the sight we have of our glorified Lord as the spiritual, highly exalted King of glory, our Redeemer as well as our King, by the eyes of our understanding and faith, than the sight afforded to the natural eye before Pentecost.

There was a necessity for our Lord's appearing in the manner He did to His disciples, after His resurrection, which will not exist at His second advent. His object then will be better served in a different way. In fact, to appear so at His second advent would be detrimental to the purpose then to be accomplished. His object in appearing to His disciples after His resurrection was to convince them that He who was dead is alive forevermore, that they might go forth as witnesses to the fact of His resurrection (Luke 24:48), and that their testimony might be a sure foundation for the faith of coming generations. Since no man can come to God acceptably, to receive the holy spirit of adoption, without faith in Christ, it became necessary, not only for the sake of the disciples then, but for all since, that the evidences of His resurrection and change should be such as natural men could grasp and appreciate. After they had become partakers of the holy spirit and understood spiritual things (See 1 Cor. 2:12-16), they could have believed the angels

at the sepulcher, that He had risen from the dead condition, even if they had seen the fleshly body of the man Christ Jesus still lying in the tomb; but not so before—the body must be away to make faith in His resurrection possible to them. After the holy spirit had enabled them to discern spiritual things, they could have believed the testimony of the prophets that He must needs die, and would rise from the dead, and that He would be highly exalted as King of glory, without its being needful for Him to appear as a man, and assume various bodies of flesh as a garment, so that they could handle Him and see Him ascend. But all this was needful for them and for all natural men. By believing, we come to God by Him and receive forgiveness of sins and the spirit of adoption, to understand spiritual things.

Even while removing the natural obstacles to faith, by assuming human form, etc, our Lord convinced the disciples and made them witnesses to others, not by their natural sight and touch, but by reasoning with them out of the Scriptures: "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24: 45-48.) Peter also states this object clearly, saying, "Him God raised up the third day, and permitted Him to become manifest—not to all the people, but to those witnessess previously chosen of God, to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to proclaim to the people that this [the resurrected Jesus] is He who has been appointed by God the judge of the living and the dead."—Acts 10:40-42. Diaglott translation.

With our Lord, after His resurrection, it was simply a question of expediency as to which way of appearing to His disciples would best accomplish His object, of making known His resurrection and change of

nature. Had He appeared as a flame of fire, as the angel appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Exod. 3:2), He might indeed have conversed with them, but the evidence thus given would have been far from being as convincing as the method He did adopt, both to the apostles and to the world at large to whom they witnessed.

If He had appeared in the glory of the spirit form, as the angel did to Daniel (Dan. 10:5-8), the glory would have been greater than the witnesses could have borne. They would probably have been so alarmed as to be unable to receive instructions from Him. To none except Paul did the Lord ever thus show Himself; and Paul was so overcome by that glimpse that he fell to the ground and was blinded by its brightness, which was above that of the sun at noonday.

In our examination of the method of manifestation adopted by our Lord during those forty days, we saw that He "permitted" Himself to become manifest even to the chosen witnesses only a few times, and then but briefly. The entire time that He was manifest to them, had it all been crowded into one day instead of being at intervals during the forty days, would probably have been less than twelve hours, or one eightieth of that entire time. This being true, it is evident that He was present with them unseen about seventy-nine eightieths of that period of forty days. And even when they did have manifestations, they were not (except once, to St. Thomas) in a form exactly like the one they had known so intimately for three years, and had seen but a few days before. It is not once intimated that they knew Him by the familiar features of His face, nor even that He was recognised by the same appearance as in other manifestations.

Mary supposed Him to be "the gardener." To the two on their way to Emmaus He was "a stranger." He was also a stranger to the fishermen on the sea of Galilee, and to the eleven in the upper room. On every occasion He was recognised by His actions, His words, or the familiar tones of His voice.

When Thomas declared that only the proof which addressed his natural sight and touch would be acceptable to him, the Lord, though He granted that demand, gently reproved him, saying, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are those who believe, not having seen. (John 20:27-29.)

The stronger evidence was that which was not addressed to natural sight, and more blessed are those who hold themselves in readiness to receive the truth through whatsoever proofs God is pleased to substantiate it.

He thus showed them, not only that He now had the power to appear in a variety of ways and forms, but also that no one of those bodies which they saw was His spiritual, glorious body, though the facts of His resurrection and presence were thus manifested to them. The different forms, and the long intervals of invisible presence with no outward manifestation, made evident the fact that though their Lord and teacher was alive and not yet ascended to the Father, He was now a spirit being, really invisible to human sight, but with ability to manifest His presence and power in a variety of ways at pleasure.*

The creating of the body and clothing in which He appeared to them in the very room in which they were gathered, was proof unquestionable that Christ was no longer a human being, though He assured His disciples that the body which they saw, and which Thomas handled, was a veritable flesh and bone body, and not a mere vision or appearance.† As a

*The occurrence recorded by Luke (4:30) should not be regarded as a case parallel to His appearing and vanishing after His resurrection. That was not a disappearance in the sense of becoming invisible to the people. It was merely an adroit, prompt movement, by which He eluded the murderous design of His enemies. Before they had executed their plans for His death He turned about, and, passing through their midst, no man had courage or power to molest Him, because His hour had not yet come.

†Let no one hastily suppose that we are here following Spiritism, Swedenborgianism or any other ism. We are simply following and logically connecting the apostolic account. The vast difference between the Bible teaching and that counterfeit of it promulgated by Satan, known as Spiritualism, we

human being He could not come into the room without opening the door, but as a spirit being He could and there He instantly created and assumed such a body of flesh and such clothing as He saw fit for the purpose intended.

Nor can we for a moment admit the suggestions offered by some, that our Lord opened the doors without being observed; for the record is plain and clear that He came and stood in their midst while the doors were shut—probably very carefully barred and bolted too—"for fear of the Jews."—John 20: 19, 26.

The lesson of His changed nature was still further emphasised by His manner of leaving their sight: "He vanished out of their sight." The human body of flesh and bones, etc., and its clothing, which appeared suddenly while the doors were shut, did not go out of the door, but simply disappeared or dissolved into the same elements from which He had created them a few moments before. He vanished out of their sight, and was no longer seen of them when the flesh and bones and clothing in which He had manifested Himself were dissolved, though doubtless He was still with them—invisibly present; and so also much of the time during those forty days.

On special occasions, for special instruction, God has granted similar power to other spirit beings, angels, enabling them to appear as men, in bodies of flesh and bones which ate and talked to those they instructed, just as our Lord did. (See Gen. 18; Judges 6: 11-22; 13:3-20.).

The power manifested by our Lord, and the angels referred to, to create and dissolve the clothing

distinctly discern. Suffice it here to point out that Spiritism affects to communicate between dead men and living men, while the Bible condemns this (Isa. 8:19), and teaches that such communications as were true have been made only by spirit beings, such as angels, and by our Lord; and not by our Lord while He was "the man Christ Jesus," nor while He was dead, but after His resurrection change, when He had become a life-giving or "quickening spirit" being.

in which they appeared, was just as superhuman as the creating and dissolving of their assumed human bodies; and the bodies were no more their glorious spiritual bodies than were the clothes they wore. It will be remembered that the seamless robe and other clothing which our Redeemer wore before His crucifixion had been divided among the Roman soldiers, and that the grave clothes were left folded away in the sepulcher (John 19: 23, 24; 20: 5-7), so that the clothing in which He appeared on the occasions mentioned must have been specially created, and probably was the most appropriate for each occasion. For instance when He appeared as a gardener to Mary, it was probably in such apparel as a gardener would wear.

That the bodies in which our Lord appeared were real human bodies, and not mere delusions, He gave them clearly to understand when He ate before them, and invited them to handle Him and see that the body was real flesh and bones, saying, "Why are ye troubled? . . . Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Some Christians draw very absurd conclusions from this expression of our Lord as to the verity of His assumed flesh and bone body. They regard the assumed body as His spirit body, and declare that a spirit body is flesh and bones, and just like a human body, excepting that an indefinable something, which they call spirit, flows through its veins instead of blood. They seem to disregard the statement of our Lord, that this was not a spirit body—that a spirit being has not flesh and bones. Do they also forget John's statement, that "It doth not yet appear" what a spirit body is, and that we shall not know until we are changed and made like Him and see Him, not as He was, but as He is? (1 John 3:2.) Do they also forget the Apostle Paul's express statement that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God?"—and his further assurance that therefore all the heirs with Christ must also "be changed?"—1 Cor. 15:50, 51.

MANY Christians have the idea that our Lord's glorious spiritual body is the very same body that was crucified and laid away in Joseph's tomb: they expect, when they see the Lord in glory, to identify Him by the scars He received on Calvary. This is a great mistake, which a very little consideration should make manifest—Firstly, It would prove that His resurrection body is not glorious or perfect, but scarred and disfigured: Secondly, It would prove that we do know what a spirit body is, notwithstanding the Apostle's statement to the contrary: Thirdly, It would prove that our redemption price was taken back; for Jesus said, "My flesh I will give for the life of the world." It was His flesh, His life as a man, His humanity, that was sacrificed for our redemption. And when He was raised to life again by the power of the Father, it was not to human existence; because that was sacrificed as our purchase price. And if that price had been taken back, we would still be under the condemnation of death, and without hope.

We have no more reason to suppose that our Lord's spirit body since His resurrection is a human body than we have for supposing that His spirit body prior to His first advent was human, or that other spirit beings have human bodies; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones; and, says the Apostle Peter, our Lord was "put to death in the flesh but made alive in spirit."

Our Lord's human body was, however, supernaturally removed from the tomb; because had it remained there it would have been an insurmountable obstacle to the faith of the disciples, who were not yet instructed in spiritual things—for "the spirit was not yet given." (John 7:39.) We know nothing about what became of it, except that it did not decay or corrupt. (Acts 2:27, 31.) Whether it was dissolved into gases or whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love, of Christ's obedience, and of our redemption, no one knows;—nor is such knowledge necessary. That God did miraculously hide the body of Moses,

we are assured (Deut. 34:6; Jude 9); and that as a memorial God did miraculously preserve from corruption the manna in the golden bowl, which was placed in the Ark under the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle, and that it was a symbol of our Lord's flesh, the bread from heaven, we also know (Exod. 14:20, 33; Heb. 9:4; John 6:51-58).

To regard our Lord's glorious body as a body of flesh would not in the least account for His peculiar and sudden appearances during those forty days prior to His ascension. How could He so suddenly appear and then vanish? How was it that He kept Himself invisible during those forty days? And why was it that His appearance each time was so changed as not to be recognized as the same one seen on any former occasion, or as the one so well-known and loved by all, before His crucifixion, only a few days previous?

It will not do merely to say that these were miracles, for then some use or necessity for the miracles should be named. If His body after His resurrection were flesh and bones, and the same body that was crucified, with all the features and scars, why did He perform miracles which not only did not establish that fact, but which were likely, we see, to teach the opposite?—that He himself was no longer human—flesh and bones—but a spirit being who could go and come as the wind, so that none could tell whence He came or whither He went, but who, for the purpose of instructing them, appeared as a man in various bodies of flesh and bones which He created and dissolved as occasion required.

Before our Lord's crucifixion, He had been on familiar terms with His disciples, but after His resurrection, though He loved them none the less, His manner toward them was more reserved. This was doubtless to impress them more forcibly with the dignity and honour of His high exaltation, and to inspire due reverence for His person and authority. Though as a man Jesus never lacked that dignity of deportment which commands respect, yet a greater

reserve was necessary and expedient after His change to the divine nature. Such reserve has always been maintained by Jehovah toward His creatures, and is expedient under the circumstances. This reserve marked all our Lord's interviews with the disciples after His resurrection. They were very brief, even as He had said, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you."—John 14:30.

Those who believe that our Heavenly Father is a spirit and not a man should find no difficulty in realizing that our Lord Jesus, who is now exalted to the divine nature, and who is not only a moral likeness of God but in fact "the express image of the Father's person," is no longer a man but a spirit being, whom no man hath seen nor can see without a miracle. It is just as impossible for men to see the unveiled glory of the Lord Jesus as it is for them to behold Jehovah. Think for a moment how even a reflection of the spiritual glory affected Moses and Israel at Sinai. (Heb. 12:21; Exod. 19; 20: 19-21; 33:20-23; 34: 29-35.) "So terrible was the sight," so overwhelming and fear-inspiring, "that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." And though Moses was supernaturally strengthened to behold the glory of the Lord, so that for forty days and forty nights, alone with God, overshadowed by His glory and without either food or drink, he received and wrote the divine law (Exod. 34:28), yet when he desired to see the Lord face to face he was told, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live." (Exod. 33:20.) All that Moses ever saw, therefore, was an appearance representing God, and nothing more was possible. This accords, too, with the Apostle's statements: "No man hath seen God at any time"; He is the King immortal, invisible, whom no man hath seen nor can [ever] see. (1 Tim. 6: 15, 16.) But that spirit beings can and do see God, who Himself is a spirit being is clearly stated.—Matt. 18:10.

If our Lord is still "the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:5, 6)—if being put to death in the flesh He was raised

again in the flesh, and not, as the Apostle declares, a life-giving spirit—then instead of being exalted higher than angels and every name that is named in heaven as well as in earth, He is still a man. And if He retains the form of a servant, which He took for the purpose of suffering death for every man, and is still a little lower than the angels, He never can see God. But how unreasonable is such a view when fully examined in the light of apostolic testimony. Consider, too, that if our Lord's flesh, that was pierced and wounded with nail and spear and crown of thorns, and marked with sorrow, is His glorious spiritual body, and if the scars and marred human features are part and parcel of the exalted Lord, He would be far from beautiful, even if we should love the wounds endured for us. And if He thus bears an imperfect, scarred, marred body, and if we shall be like Him, would it not imply that the apostles and saints who were crucified, beheaded, stoned to death, burned, cut to pieces and torn by beasts, as well as those who met with accidents, would each likewise bear his blemishes and scars? And in that view would not heaven present a most awful spectacle—to all eternity? But this is not the case, and no one could long hold so unreasonable and unscriptural a view. Spirit beings are perfect in every particular, and so the Apostle reminds the Church, who are heirs of heavenly or spiritual glory and honour, that, though sown [in death] in weakness [with marks and wounds, etc.] it [the being] is raised in power; though sown in dishonour [with lines of care and sorrow, etc.] it is raised in glory; though sown a natural body [literally, "an animal body"] it will be raised a spiritual body; and that as we have borne the image of the earthly father, we shall bear the image of the heavenly Lord. (1 Cor. 15:42-51.) Our Lord Jesus for our sakes took and bore the image of the earthly also, for a while, that He might redeem us. But in His resurrection He became the heavenly Lord (Rom. 14:9), and we, if faithful, shall soon bear the image of the heavenly Lord (spiritual bodies).

as we now still bear the image of the earthly lord, Adam (human bodies).

Remember Paul's case—In order that he might be one of the Apostles, he must be a witness—must see the Lord after His resurrection. He was not one of those who saw the manifestations of resurrection and presence during the forty days, hence he was given a special glimpse of the Lord. But he saw Him, not as did the others—not veiled in flesh and garments of various forms. And the merest glance at the unveiled glorious person of our Lord caused him to fall to the ground blinded with a glory far “above the brightness of the sun at noon-day”: from which blindness, to restore him to even partial sight, required a miracle. (Acts 9:17, 18.) Did not Paul see the Lord as He is—a spiritual being? And did not our Lord during the forty days appear as He was, i.e., as He had been previously, for the special purposes and reasons already pointed out? There is no room to doubt this. But the Lord had an object in appearing to Paul thus, just as He had, and served another object by appearing differently to the others. This object Paul shows, saying: “Last of all He was seen of me also—as by one born before the due time.” (1 Cor. 15:8—literal rendering.) As the resurrection of our Lord was His birth from the dead, to the full perfection of spiritual being (Col. 1:18; Rom. 8:29), so the resurrection of the Church, the body of Christ, is here and elsewhere referred to as a birth. In our birth or resurrection as spirit beings, we shall see the Lord as He is, just as Paul saw Him; but we, being changed or born then, as spirit beings, will not be stricken down nor blinded with the sight of our Lord's glorious person. Paul's statement means that he saw Him as we shall see Him—“as He is”: he saw Him as all the body of Christ shall see Him, but before the due time, before he was born from the dead, and therefore before able to endure it;—yet “as” each one so born shall in due time see Him.

Moses, coming down from the mount to communicate to Israel the Law Covenant, was a type

of the greater Law-giver and Mediator of the New Covenant, who at His second advent shall come forth to rule and bless the world. Moses typified, therefore, the entire Church, of which our Lord is the Head. Moses' face was caused to shine, so that the people could not look at him, and he must thereafter wear a veil, as a type of the spiritual glory of Christ, an illustration of the point we are now examining. Christ has the real glory and brightness, the express image of the Father's person, and we shall be like Him, and no man can behold that glory; hence whatever manifestation of the Law-giver there will be to the world when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, the glory of the spiritual persons cannot be seen. They will speak through the veil—under the cover. This, as well as more, was meant by Moses' veil.—Exod. 34:30-33.

As we give the matter careful study, we come more and more to recognize the divine wisdom displayed in the manner of revealing the resurrection of our Lord to the apostles, that they should be thoroughly satisfied and reliable witnesses, and that the meek of the world might be able to receive their testimony and believe that God raised our Lord from the dead—that they might recognize Him as the one that was dead, but is now alive forevermore, and, believing, might come unto God by Him. And as we consider Him under the leadings of the holy spirit of truth, our minds expand and we see Him no longer the man Christ Jesus, but the Lord of glory and power, partaker of the divine nature. And thus we know Him, for whose coming and kingdom the Church has so earnestly prayed and longed. And no one properly recognizing His great exaltation can expect at His second coming the man Christ Jesus in the body of flesh prepared for sacrifice and wounded and given in death as our ransom. Nor should we expect that at His second coming He would "appear," or manifest Himself, in various flesh and bone forms to the world—that was needful for those early witnesses, but not so now. He will, as we shall see, manifest His second presence very differently.

From what we have seen regarding spirit beings and their manifestations in times past, it is evident that if our Lord were to manifest Himself at His second advent either by opening men's eyes to behold His glory, as He did with Paul and Daniel, or by assuming a human body, it would be detrimental to the plan revealed in His Word. The effect of appearing in glory to the world, their eyes being miraculously wrought upon to enable them to see Him, would be almost to paralyze them with the overwhelming sight, while to appear as a man would be to lower the standard of dignity and give a lower than the true estimate of the divine nature and form. As neither would seem to be necessary or advisable now, we cannot presume that either of these methods will be adopted.

On the contrary, we should expect that the Christ would be manifest in the flesh of mankind in the same manner that when the Lord was "made flesh" and dwelt among men. God was manifest in His flesh. Human nature, when perfect and in harmony with God, is a likeness of God in the flesh; hence the originally perfect Adam was a likeness of God, and the perfect man Christ Jesus was also; so that He could say to the disciple Philip, who asked to see the Father, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"—he hath seen the likeness of God in the flesh, "God manifest in the flesh."

So, too, mankind in general, as its members come gradually back to the long-lost image of God, will be fleshly images and likenesses of the Father and of the Christ. At the very beginning of the Millennium, there will be samples of perfect manhood before the world: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the holy prophets, already tried and approved, will be the "princes" among men, the exponents and representatives of the spiritual, invisible kingdom. In these Christ will be manifested—in their flesh—even as the Father was manifested in His flesh. And as "whosoever will" reaches perfection and comes into full harmony with the will of Christ, every such

one will be an image of God and of Christ, and in each of these Christ will be manifested.

Because created in God's moral image, the perfect man, fully consecrated, will be able to appreciate perfectly the holy spirit and Word of God; and the glorified Church will direct him. No doubt, too, visions and direct revelations, and general communications between the spiritual kingdom and its earthly representatives and exponents, will be much more free and general than similar communications ever were before—more after the order of the communions of Eden, before sin brought condemnation and separation from God's favour and communion.

Nothing, then, either in reason or in Scripture, demands that our Lord shall at His second advent appear in various bodies of flesh and bones. That such a procedure is not essential is evident from the success of Satan's kingdom, which operates through human beings as agents. Those who partake of the spirit of evil and error represent the great unseen prince, most fully. He is thus manifest in their flesh, though himself a spirit being, is invisible to men.

The Christ "changed," made partakers of the divine nature, shall be spirit beings as truly as is Satan, and equally invisible to men. Their operations will be similar in manner, though directly opposite in character and results; their honoured agents, not bound and made slaves by ignorance and weakness, as are most of the servants of Satan, but made perfect, and "free indeed," will act intelligently and harmoniously, from choice and from love; and their appointments will be rewards of righteousness.

OUR Lord's presence will be manifested to the world by exhibitions of "power and great glory," not, however, merely to the natural sight, but to the eyes of their understanding, as they shall open to an appreciation of the great changes which the new Ruler shall effect. His presence and righteous authority will be recognized in both the

punishments and the blessings that will flow to mankind from His reign.

It has long been generally believed that distress and trouble come as punishments for evil doing, upon the wicked. This seeming to be a natural and proper law, people in general have accepted it, thinking that it should be so, even if it is not; yet the hard facts of experience agree with the Bible, that in the past it has been the godly who have oftenest suffered afflictions and persecutions. (2 Tim. 3: 12.) But in the "Day of Trouble," the period introducing Messiah's reign, this order will begin to be reversed. In that day, evil powers are to be overthrown, and righteousness, established by a gradual process, shall speedily work out a corresponding retribution to evil-doers, and blessings to them that do good—"Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, . . . but glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good"—in that "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds." (Rom. 2: 9, 10, 6, 5.) And since there is so much that is wrong now, the retribution will be very heavy at first, making a "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." Thus, in vengeance, and trouble, and wrath upon the nations, will the Lord reveal to the world the fact of the change of dispensations, and the change of rulers. And thus, "When the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26: 5-11.) They will learn that under the new order of things right-doers are to be exalted and evil-doers restrained and punished. For clear prophetic testimony relative to this kingdom and its operation on behalf of the humble, the upright, the poor, the needy and the oppressed, and its overthrow of monopolies and every system of injustice and oppression, and the general equalization of human affairs, read carefully Psalm 72:1-19; 37:1-14.

Our King will thus reveal Himself gradually: some will discern the new Ruler sooner than others, but

ultimately "every eye shall see [horao—discern] Him." (Rev. 1:7.) But "He cometh with the clouds;" and while the clouds of trouble are heavy and dark, when the mountains (kingdoms of this world) are trembling and falling, and the earth (organized society) is being shaken, disintegrated, melted, some will begin to realize what we now proclaim as already at hand—that the great day of Jehovah has come; that the foretold day of trouble and wrath upon the nations is beginning; and that Jehovah's Anointed is taking to Himself His great power and beginning His work, of laying justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet. (Isa. 28:17.) And "He must reign until" He shall have put down all authorities and laws on earth, contrary to those which control in heaven.

As the trouble increases, men will seek, but in vain, for protection in the "dens" and caves, the great rocks and fortresses of society (Free Masonry, Odd Fellowship, and Trades Unions, Guilds, Trusts, and all societies secular and ecclesiastical), and in the mountains (governments) of earth; saying, "Fall over* [cover, protect] and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come."—Rev. 6:15-17.

The idolatry of money in which the whole world has gone mad, and which is to have so prominent a place in the trouble, causing not only anxiety for its accumulation, but also for its preservation, is to be completely overthrown, as shown in Isa. 2:8-21; Ezek. 7:17-19.

*The Greek word *epi* here used, is generally translated *on*, but has also the significance of *over* and *about*, and is so translated many times in the common version. The thought is that of protection, not of destruction. The common view of this passage, that it teaches that wicked men will get faith enough to pray for literal mountains to fall, is absurd. The real fulfilment is already beginning: the great, the rich, and no less the poor, are seeking to the mountains and rocks and caves for shelter from the darkening storm of trouble which all see is gathering.

The great day of trouble will be recognized, and from its storm all will seek protection, though few will recognize the judgments of the Lord then abroad in the world as the result of His presence, the setting up of His authority, and the enforcement of His laws. In the end, however, all shall recognise ["see"] the King of glory; and all who then love righteousness will rejoice to obey Him and conform themselves fully to His just requirements.

That will be a time of retribution upon all who by fraud or force, sometimes in the name of law and under its sanction, have unrighteously grasped the rights or property of others. The retribution, as we have seen, will come from the Lord, through the uprising of the masses of the people. In their distress, loth to part with a pound or an acre, or an assumed right or dignity long enjoyed and long undisputed, yet seeing the approaching retribution, many will seek the covering of the hitherto powerful organizations—civil, social and ecclesiastical—to promote and shield their interests, feeling that alone they must fall. But these shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's anger. The approaching conflict and retribution will cause all the families of the earth to wail; for it will be a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation—no, nor ever shall be again. It will be "because of Him" that they will wail; because of His judgments producing in a natural way the great trouble; because the Lord ariseth to shake terribly the earth, and to destroy its corruptions. (Isa. 2:21.) So far-reaching will be the judgments and the trouble that none shall escape. Ultimately every eye shall discern the change, and recognize that the Lord reigneth. The trouble might be greatly lessened could men see and promptly act upon principles of equity, ignoring and relinquishing all unjust privileges of the past, even though legalized; but this, selfishness will not permit until the trouble shall break and overthrow the proud, humble the powerful and exalt the meek.

But not until the great day of trouble is about closing—not until the Gentile kingdoms are ground

to powder and utterly removed, no place being found for them—not until great Babylon is utterly overthrown and her influence over the world broken—will the great mass of mankind come to realize the true state of the case. Then they will see that the great trouble through which they will have passed was that symbolically termed “The battle of the great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14); that in proportion as they have aided error and wrong, they have been battling against the law and forces of the new empire and the new Ruler of earth; and that in proportion as their tongues, and pens, and hands, and influence, and means, were used to support the right and the truth on any subject, they had been to that extent fighting on the Lord’s side.

Some will learn the significance of the trouble more quickly than others, because more teachable. And during all the trouble there will be in the world those who will bear witness to its cause, declaring the Lord’s presence and the setting up of His kingdom (which is in opposition to the powers of darkness) to be the real cause of the trouble and shaking and overturning of society, showing that all who oppose truth and righteousness are the enemies of the new kingdom, and that unless they quickly surrender they must soon suffer ignominious defeat. Yet the masses will be heedless of wise counsel, as they have always been, until completely humbled under the iron rule of the new kingdom, only at last realizing the folly of their course.

The true teacher and light bearer (Matt. 5:14), the true Church, the body of Christ, is not to be left in darkness to learn of her Lord’s presence by the manifestations of His wrath and power, as the world will learn of it. For her enlightenment special provision has been made. By the sure word of prophecy, which shines as a light in a dark place, she is clearly and definitely informed just what to expect. (2 Peter 1:19.) Through the prophetic word, she shall not only be shielded from discouragement, and enabled to overcome the besetments, snares

and stumbling-stones so prevalent in "the evil day," and thus to stand approved of God, but she becomes the light-bearer and instructor of the world. The Church is thus enabled to point out to the world the cause of the trouble, to announce the presence of the new Ruler, to declare the policy, plan and object of the new dispensation, and to instruct the world as to the wisest course to pursue in view of these things. And though men will not give heed to the instruction until the lesson of submission has been forced upon them by the trouble, it will greatly aid them then in learning the lesson.

SEEMINGLY CONFLICTING SCRIPTURES.

THERE are some statements of Scripture with reference to the manner of the Lord's return and appearing which, until critically examined, appear to be contradictory of each other. And no doubt they have for centuries served the divine purpose of concealing the truth until the due time for it to be understood; and even then, from all except the special class of consecrated ones for whom it was intended.

For instance, our Lord said, "Behold I come as a thief"; and, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man [the days of His presence]: They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage," "and knew not until the flood came." "And when Jesus was questioned of the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation" [marginal reading, "not with outward show"].—Rev. 16:15; Luke 17:26, 27, 20; Matt. 38, 39.

These scriptures plainly state and illustrate the manner of the Lord's coming. They show that He will be present unseen, doing a work of which the world for a time will be entirely unaware. His arrival must therefore be in a quiet manner, unobserved, and entirely unknown to the world, just "as a thief" would come. without noise or other demon-

stration to attract attention. As in the days of Noah the world went on with its affairs as usual, not in the least disconcerted, and without the slightest faith in the preaching of Noah with reference to the coming flood, so in the early part of the Day of the Lord, the world, having no faith in the announcement of His presence and of the impending trouble, will go on as usual, giving no heed whatever to any such preaching until, in the great flood of trouble, the old world—the old order of things—goes down, passes away, preparatory to the full establishment of the new order, the Kingdom of God under the whole heavens.—“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days [of the presence] of the Son of man.”

On the other hand, we find scriptures which at first sight seem to be in direct conflict with these; as, for instance: “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.”—“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty messengers, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”—“They [the world] shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”—“Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.”—1 Thes. 4:16; 2 Thes. 1:7, 8; Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7.

As seekers after truth, it will not do for us to say, in view of these passages, that the majority of them seem to favour whatever view we incline to prefer, and then to ignore the others. Until we have a view of the matter in which every Bible statement finds a reasonable representation, we should not feel sure that we have the truth on the subject. One statement of God is as true, and as firm a foundation for faith, as a hundred. And it would be wiser to seek for a harmonious understanding than to arrive at a conclusion or adopt a theory based on a one-sided interpretation, and thus to deceive ourselves and others.

Christians generally make no effort to harmonize these statements, and therefore their ideas are one-sided and incorrect. The last group of statements is just as positive as the first, and apparently teaches the very reverse of a quiet, unobserved, thief-like manner in the Lord's coming and presence. In addition to these statements, we are referred to two other illustrations of the manner of His coming, viz.: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," and "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Acts 1: 11. Matt. 24:27.) To reach a correct conclusion, these also must be given due weight.

In our examination of the subject we should note that while our Lord stated, as a positive fact, that His kingdom would be established without outward show, and that His coming, His presence, would be as a thief, requiring close, attentive watching to apprehend and discern it, all of the above texts generally cited as proof of an outward, visible manifestation are in highly figurative language, except the one which says that He will come in like manner as He went away. The symbolic must always bend in interpretation to the plainer, more literal statements, as soon as their symbolic character is recognized. Whenever a literal interpretation would do violence to reason, and also place the passage in direct antagonism to plain statements of Scripture, such passage should be considered figurative, and its interpretation as a symbol should be sought in harmony with obviously plain and literal passages, and with the general character and object of the revealed plan. By recognizing and thus interpreting the symbols in this case, the beautiful harmony of all the statements is manifest. Let us now examine them and see how perfectly they agree with the statements which are not symbolic.

(a) "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and

with the trump of God." (1 Thes. 4:16.) The voice and the trumpet here mentioned correspond in every way with the same figures used in Rev. 11: 15-19—"The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. . . . And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged," etc. The same events are referred to in Daniel's prophecy:—"And at that time shall Michael [Christ] stand up [assume control], the great Prince, . . . and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, . . . and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." And Paul adds to his mention of the voices and the trumpet the statement, "And the dead in Christ shall rise first." In 2 Tim. 4:1 he further states that Christ shall judge the quick (the living) and the dead, at this time of His appearing and kingdom; and the beginning of this judgment of the living nations is everywhere described as the greatest time of trouble the world has ever known.—Dan. 12:1.

Thus, Paul, John and Daniel evidently refer to the same time, the time of our Lord's appearing, and the establishment of His kingdom in the midst of a great time of trouble, and to the events preceding and introducing it. The same result is shown by each writer to follow the standing up of Michael, the voices and the trumpet: namely, trouble and wrath upon the nations and the resurrection of the dead. Next, mark the figure used:—

"WITH A SHOUT."—The Greek word here translated "shout" is *keleusma*, which signifies a shout of encouragement. A shout implies a public message designed for the ears, not of a few, but of a mixed multitude. It is generally designed either to alarm and terrify or to assist and encourage. Or it may have the one effect upon one class, and the reverse effect upon another, according to circumstances and conditions.

The aspect of affairs in the world for at least fifty years very strikingly corresponds with this symbol, in the outbursts of world-wide encouragement for all men to wake up to a sense of their rights and privileges as men, and to consider their mutual relationships, the principles upon which they are based and the ends which they should accomplish. Where on the face of the earth is the civilized nation that has not heard the shout, and is not influenced by it! The entire civilized world has, for years past, been studying political economy, civil rights and social liberties as never before in the annals of history; and men are encouraging each other, and being encouraged, as never before, to probe these subjects to the very foundation. The shout of encouragement started by the increase of knowledge among men has already encircled the earth, and under its influence men are banding themselves together, encouraged and assisted by men of brain and genius, to contend and strive for both real and fancied rights and liberties; and as their organizations increase and multiply, the shout grows louder and longer, and will by and by result as foretold, in the great time of trouble and tumult of angry nations. This result is graphically described by the Prophet—"The noise of a multitude in the mountains [kingdoms] like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of battle."—Isa. 13:4.

"THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL"—is another striking symbol of similar import. The name "archangel" signifies chief messenger; and our anointed Lord Himself is Jehovah's Chief Messenger—the "Messenger of the Covenant." (Mal. 3:1.) Daniel refers to the same personage, calling Him Michael, which name signifies who as God—an appropriate name for Him who is "the express image of the Father's person," and the representative of His authority and power. The voice of the Archangel represents Christ's authority and command. This symbol, then, represents Christ as taking control and issuing His commands, His official orders, an-

nouncing the change of dispensation by the enforcement of the laws of His kingdom.

The same thought is differently expressed by Daniel, when he says, Then shall Michael, the great Prince, "stand up." To stand up signifies to assume authority, to give commands. See "arise," Isa. 2: 19, 21. Another illustration of this symbol is from David, who says of Christ prophetically, "He uttered his voice; the earth melted." The great time of trouble will be precipitated, and the earth (organized society) will melt, or disintegrate, under the change of administration going into effect when the new King utters His voice of command. At His command, systems of error, civil, social and religious, must go down, however old or firmly entrenched and fortified they may be. The sword out of His mouth shall cause the havoc: The truth on every subject, and in all its varied aspects, shall judge men, and, under His power and overruling, shall cause the overturning of evil and error in all their thousand forms.

"THE TRUMP OF GOD."—Many seem thoughtlessly to entertain the idea that this trumpet will be a literal sound on the air. But this will be seen to be an unreasonable expectation, when it is noticed that Paul here refers to what the Revelator designates "The Seventh Trumpet," the "Last Trump" in a series of symbolic trumpets. (Rev. 11:15; 1 Cor. 15:52.) The proof that these references are to the same trumpet is found in the record of the events connected with each. Paul mentions the resurrection, and the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom, as connected with "the trump of God," and the Revelator mentions the same with even greater minuteness. The propriety of calling the "seventh," or "last trump" the "trump of God," is evident, too, when we remember that the events mentioned under the preceding six trumpets of Revelation refer to humanity's doings, while the seventh refers specially to the Lord's work, and covers the "Day of the Lord." Since the six preceding trumpets were symbols—and this is generally admitted by commenta-

tors and students who make any claim as expositors of Revelation—it would be a violation of reason and common sense to expect the seventh, the last of the series, to be a literal, audible sound on the air. And not only so, but it would be out of harmony with the Lord's general methods, as well as with those statements of Scripture indicating the secrecy of His coming; for a thief never sounds a trumpet to announce his arrival.

The seven trumpets of Revelation are all symbolic, and represent seven great periods of time and their events. We find ourselves to-day in the midst of the very events which mark the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The great voices, the increase of knowledge, the angry nations, etc., taken in connection with time-prophecies, establish this as a fact. Many events are yet to transpire before this seventh or last trumpet ceases to sound; as, for instance, the rewarding of the saints and prophets, the resurrection of all the dead. etc. In fact, it covers the entire period of the Millennial reign of Christ, as indicated by the events which are to transpire under it.—Rev. 10: 7; 11:15, 18.

Thus we find the "shout," the "voice of the Archangel" and "the trump of God" all symbols, and now in process of fulfilment. Note carefully, too, the fact that each of the three prophecies just referred to (Dan. 12:1; Rev. 11:15; 1 Thes. 4:16) declares the Lord's presence at the time when the events mentioned transpire. They were foretold for the very purpose of indicating the manner in which His invisible presence would be manifested to those who have faith in the word of prophecy. Paul says, "The Lord shall descend with [literally in, or during] a shout," voice, trumpet, etc.; John says that the kingdoms of this world become His, during the time of these events; and Daniel says, "At that time shall Michael, the great Prince [Christ], stand up" (be present) and take to Himself His great power. If, therefore, we can recognize the shout, the voices and the sounding of the great trumpet, we should

accept them as indications, not that the Lord will come soon, but rather that He has come and is now present, and that the harvest work of gathering the wheat and burning the tares is already under way. Yet it is not to the natural vision, but only to the eye of faith, through the sure word of prophecy, that His presence and work can be discerned.

Just here another fact should not be overlooked, namely, that the "Shout," the "Voice of the Archangel," and the "Trump of God," as above explained, are all instrumentalities for the accomplishment of the harvest work of the Gospel Age. If, therefore, we see not only the meaning of these symbols, but the foretold results actually taking place, we have additional proof both that we have rightly interpreted the symbols, and that we are now in this period called the "harvest." Many will need no aid in tracing a separating work now going on between the truly consecrated and the merely nominal Christians. Many can see the symbolic fire already under way, and can discern the "shout" of the people, the command of the new King Immanuel and the events called the "seventh trumpet," and the "clouds" of trouble, in which the Lord comes and from and in which His power is to be manifested—subduing all things unto Himself.

The recognition of the harvest work in actual process is proof of the Lord's presence, since He declared that He would be the chief reaper and director of the entire work, and that this would be His first work—"Behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. . . . And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."—"In the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, gather" etc. (Rev. 15:14, 16; Matt. 13:30.) The harvest work will be accomplished gradually, but all of its days are "days of the Son of Man"—days of our Lord's

presence and power—recognized in the end by all, but at first only by the class specified by the Apostle—“Ye, brethren—not in darkness.”

“IN FLAMING FIRE.”—The next of these symbolic statements can be readily understood, if the meaning of the symbols, fire, etc., be borne in mind. It is, “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—2 Thes. 1:8.

Expressed literally, we understand this to signify that our Lord’s presence will be revealed or manifested to the world from His position of spiritual control (“heaven”), in the wrath and punishment then visited upon evil and evil-doers. It will be consuming wrath, as indicated by the symbol, fire, and will leave neither root nor branch of evil systems, error, oppression, or wilful sinners; and all the proud, and all evil doers, shall be burned up as stubble in that judgment day. In its beginning—in this “harvest” period—this fire will burn very fiercely, consuming pride and evil, now of such rank growth. Happy those who will surrender their pride and evil to be destroyed, that they themselves be not destroyed also (in the “second death”), as some resisters will evidently be, during the Millennial age. It is of this time that we read, “Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”—Mal. 4: 1.

The “mighty angels,” messengers, or agents of His power, are various, and may properly be understood as applying to and including all the various agencies, animate and inanimate, which shall be used by our Lord in the overthrow of the evil systems of the present, and in the chastisement of evil-doers.

While the wrath or vengeance of the Lord is thus to be expressed in flaming fire, in consuming trouble, such as never before was known—so general and wide-spread, and so destructive of evil—righteousness and the righteous will begin to be favoured. And as these dealings become more and more apparent, men will begin to draw the inference that a new power has taken control of human affairs; and thus the presence of our Lord as King of kings shall be revealed to the world. "He shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance [both] on them that know not God [who are not really acquainted with God, but who nevertheless fail to obey the light of conscience, which all to some extent possess], and [also on those who, while knowing God, yet] obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Under the chastisements and increasing light and favourable opportunities of the Millennial day, all will be brought to such a clear knowledge of the truth and the way of righteousness as to be without the excuse of ignorance, or of inability to obey the truth; and those who persistently continue enemies of God and righteousness shall be punished with lasting destruction [a destruction from which there shall be no resurrection] from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

"IN POWER AND GREAT GLORY."—The next statement is to the effect that the world will see the Son of man coming, before His kingdom is fully set up or His joint-heirs are all gathered and exalted with Him. And, seeing His coming, all the tribes of the earth will mourn—"They shall see the Son of man coming with power and great glory."

Already the world sees the clouds of trouble gathering and darkening; they realize that a power is now at work in the affairs of men, with which they cannot cope; the near future, from the present outlook, is dark and ominous to all who have sufficient intelligence to mark the trend of events. Thinking men observe the persistency with which questions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, are forced

upon their consideration, demanding an expression of their individual principles. Many recognize the glory and power of earth's new Ruler, yet because clouds and darkness are round about Him they do not recognize the King Himself. Men see the clouds, and therefore see Him coming in the clouds with power and great glory [the glory of power and justice], but they do not recognize Him. Not until the clouds have let fall hail stones and coals of fire (Psa. 18: 12, 13) to batter down men's pride, and selfishness, and prejudices, and consume these, will the clouds disappear, and reveal the full majesty and glory of Christ's presence. If men would consider, and hearken to the voice of the Lord, which now directs the course of justice, and warns of impending retribution, the great disasters of the near future would be averted; but "God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet men perceiveth it not. . . Then he openeth the ears of men [in the thunder tones of "the day of trouble"] and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw men from his [own] purpose, and hide pride from man."

"Behold, he cometh with clouds," and in due time "every eye shall see [discern] him," shall recognize His presence, power and authority; and all must submit to it whether willing or unwilling, until the loosing of Satan for a little season, in the close of the Millennium, when after full experience their willingness or unwillingness will be fully tested, and the unwilling will be destroyed—the second death, symbolically called the lake of fire.—Rev. 21:8.

Thus seen, all of these symbolic explanations of the manner of our Lord's coming accord perfectly with the plain statements which declare that His presence will be a secret for a time, known only to those watching.

IN LIKE MANNER.

WHAT, now, is taught by the statement of the angel at the time of our Lord's departure—Acts 1:11—"This same Jesus which is

taken up from you into heaven shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven”?

A careful examination of this text will manifest its harmony with the foregoing. Many seem to think the passage reads, As you see the Lord ascend into heaven, so, in like manner, you shall see Him come again. Such should read it again and again, until they note the fact that it does not say that those who saw Him go will see Him come, nor that any one else will see Him come. What it does say is, that the manner of His coming will be like the manner of His going. What, then, was the manner of His going? Was it with great splendour, and with great demonstration? Was it with trumpet sound and voices and a great shout rending the air, and the Lord's person shining in supernatural glory and brightness? If so, we should expect His coming again to be “in like manner.” On the other hand, was it not as quietly and secretly as was possible, consistent with His purpose of having thoroughly convinced witnesses of the fact? None saw Him, or knew of the fact, except His faithful followers. His statement (John 14:19), “Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more,” has never yet been disproved; for none but the brethren saw even His manifestations after His resurrection, and no others witnessed His ascension. And in like manner as He went away (quietly, secretly, so far as the world was concerned, and unknown except to His followers), so, in this manner He comes again. And as when He went away He lifted up His hands and blessed them, so, when He comes again, it is that their joy may be full, as He said: “I will come again, and receive you unto myself”; “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”—Luke 24:50, 51; John 14:3; 16:22.

The angel seemed also to give special emphasis to the fact that the coming again would be the coming of this very “same Jesus”—the same one who left the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and became man—became poor that we might be made rich; the same Jesus that died on

Calvary; the same Jesus that arose a quickening spirit the third day; the same Jesus that had manifested His change during the forty days—this same Jesus now ascended up on high. Yes, it is the same Jesus who has experienced two changes of nature—first from spirit to human, and then from human to divine. These changes of nature have not destroyed His individuality. His identity was preserved, as the angel thus assures us, whether the philosophy of that fact be understood or not; and though we shall know Him no more after the flesh (as a man), but should remember His exaltation, that He is now of the divine, spiritual nature, and should anticipate His coming in harmony with this change and exaltation, yet we may remember that He is the same loving Jesus, and not changed in this respect. It is "this same Jesus," who, though present forty days after His resurrection, was seen of the disciples only, and by them but briefly, who in His second presence will be as invisible to the world as during the forty days preceding His ascension. We must remember that He does not come to give Himself as a sacrifice, and hence that He has no further use for a human body prepared for sacrifice. (Heb. 10:5.) That is all over now: He dies no more, but now comes to rule and bless and uplift the redeemed race.

Our Lord furnished us a most beautiful illustration of the manner in which His presence will be revealed, when He said, "As the bright-shining emerges from the east, and illuminates even unto the west, so will be the presence of the Son of man." (Matt. 24:27.) That most translations of this verse are faulty in using the word lightning, where sunlight is meant, is evident; for lightning flashes do not come out of the east and shine unto the west. They just as frequently come from other quarters, and rarely, if ever, flash clear across the heavens. The Lord's illustration, and the only one which will comport with His words, is the sun's brightness, which does invariably emerge from the east and shine even unto the west. The Greek word "astrape,"

here used, is thus shown to be improperly translated in this text, and also in the account of the same words by Luke (17:24). Another instance of the use of this word "astrape" by our Lord is found in Luke 11:36, where it applies to the brightness of a candle, and in the common version is rendered "bright-shining." Incorrect ideas of the manner of our Lord's coming and revealing, firmly fixed in the minds of translators, led them into this error of translating "astrape" by the word "lightning." They supposed that He would be revealed suddenly, like a flash of lightning, and not gradually like the dawning sunlight. But how beautiful is the figure of sunrise, as illustrating the gradual dawning of truth and blessing in the day of His presence. The Lord associates the overcomers with Himself in this figure, saying, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father," And the Prophet, using the same figure, says, "The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams." The dawning is gradual, but finally the full, clear brightness shall thoroughly banish the darkness of evil, ignorance, superstition and sin.

An imperfect translation of the word "parousia" has further tended to obscure the sense of this passage. In the Emphatic Diaglott and in Prof. Young's translation it is rendered presence, in Rotherham's it is arrival; while in the common version it is rendered coming. And though the text of the Revised Version retains this last erroneous rendering—coming—yet in the marginal reading it acknowledges "presence" to be the true definition of the Greek. The Greek word parousia invariably signifies personal presence, as having come, having arrived; and it should never be understood as signifying to be on the way, as the English word coming is generally used. The text under consideration therefore teaches that as the sunlight gradually dawns, so shall the presence of the Son of man be gradually manifested or revealed.

Together with this illustration, our Lord coupled words of caution to guard us against certain errors

which would be advanced about the time of His second advent, calculated to lead His Church astray. "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 chambers; believe it not. For as the bright shining [sun] cometh out of the east and [gradually] shineth even unto the west, so shall be the presence of the son of man." Thus does our Lord put us on guard against two errors rapidly growing in our day. One is the claim that our Lord will come in the flesh, in the wilderness or desert of Palestine; and, so believing, some have gone thither, and are waiting to see Jesus in the flesh, with the scars, as when crucified. Expecting Him as He was, and not "as He is," they seriously err, and blind themselves to the truth, as did the Jews at the first advent. These false expectations lead this class to interpret literally the statement of the prophet (Zech. 14:4), "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," etc. Blinded by false expectations, they do not see that the "feet" in this passage are figurative, as truly as in Psalms 91:12; Isaiah 52:7; Psalm 8:6; 110:1; Ephesians 6:15; Deuteronomy 33:3; and in many other passages. If they knew what to expect, they would know not to go to Jerusalem to look for the man Christ Jesus; for the highly exalted King comes as the sunlight, making His presence and influence felt the world over. Wherefore, "Go not forth."

"If they shall say, Behold, he is in the secret chambers: believe it not." Spiritism, ever ready to deceive by counterfeits, and ever ready to use advanced truths as a garment of light (2 Cor. 11:13, 14), has not hesitated to claim that we are in a period of dispensational change, the dawning of a glorious age. Among other such things, some of them even teach that Christ is present, and, we doubt not, ere long they will give seances at which they will claim to show Him in the secret chambers. Should the error present itself in this form, or any other, let us remember our Lord's words and repudiate all such claims as false, knowing that not thus will He reveal His

presence, but "as the sunlight," emerging gradually—"the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams."

OUR LORD'S PAROUSIA IN THE HARVEST.

THE Greek is a very exact language: a fact which greatly enhances its value in giving exact expression to truth. Thus, for instance, in our common English Bibles, the word come is used to translate thirty-two Greek words, each of which has a fine shade of difference. Instances:—ephistemi signifies to overtake, as in Luke 21:34—"come upon [overtake] you unawares;" sunerchomai signifies to gather, or come together, as in 1 Cor. 11:18—"come together in the church;" proserchomai signifies to approach, or come toward, as in Heb. 4:16—"Let us therefore come boldly;" heko signifies to arrive, or have come, or came, as when the action of coming is completed, as in John 2:4—"Mine hour is not yet come;" enistemi signifies to be present, and is so translated, except in two instances where it should be so rendered: 2 Tim. 3:1—"Perilous times shall come"—be present; and 2 Thes. 2:2—"That the day of Christ is at hand"—present. Parousia, too, signifies presence, and should never be translated coming, as in the common English Bible, where it is twice rendered properly, presence. (2 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:12.) The "Emphatic Diaglott," a very valuable translation of the New Testament, renders parousia properly, PRESENCE, in almost every occurrence of the word.

The two Greek words, heko and parousia, and their use in the New Testament, are what we desire to notice at present, and particularly the latter of these; because a correct appreciation of their significance sheds light upon the manner of our Lord's return, through passages in which they occur,

while the common but erroneous translation beclouds the very point it should illuminate.*

With the correct thought as to the meaning of parousia in mind—not that of coming, as being on the way, but presence, as after arrival—let us examine some passages in which the word is used. And from these we will learn that presence does not necessarily imply sight, but that it is applicable also to things present but unseen. Thus, for instance, angels, spirit beings, can be present with us, yet unseen, as our Lord was present in the world and often with the disciples during the forty days after His resurrection, without being seen of the world, or by His disciples except on the few brief occasions already referred to. Those days were days of His parousia (presence), as much as the preceding thirty-three and a half years had been.

In the conversation previous to the question of Matt. 24:3, our Lord had foretold the destruction of the temple, and the rejection of Israel after the flesh until a time when they would gladly recognise Him as their Messiah and say, "Blessed is he." He had told His disciples that He would go away, and come again and receive them unto Himself. He called their day the "harvest," or end of that age, and He had told them of a future "harvest" at the time of His second coming. (Matt. 9:37, 38; 13:39, 40.) Doubtless remembering that few recognized Him as the Christ at His first advent, they wanted to know how He might be surely recognized at His second advent—expecting probably that His second advent would occur in their day. Hence their inquiry, "What shall be the sign [indication] of thy parousia [presence] and of the end of the age?"

* The word parousia occurs twenty-four times in the Greek Testament, and is only twice in the English com. ver. (2 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:12) correctly translated presence. The other occurrences, in which it is mistranslated coming, are as follows: Matt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. 15:23; 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6, 7; Phil. 1:26; 1 Thes. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thes. 2:1, 8, 9; James 5:7, 8; 2 Pet. 1:16; 3:4, 12; 1 John 2:28.

Because of their disposition to mix the closing events of the Jewish age, or harvest, in which they already were, with the then future "harvest," or end of the Gospel dispensation, our Lord gave quite a detailed account of events which must intervene, indicating a lapse of a considerable period between, yet giving no clear idea of its length; for even He did not then know how long it would be.—Mark 13:32.

Our Lord's reply in verses 1 to 14 covers the entire Gospel age; and His words in verses 15 to 22 have a double application—literally to the close of the Jewish age, and figuratively to the end of this Gospel age, of which the Jewish age was a shadow. Verses 23-26 contain words of warning against false Christs, and in verse 27 He reaches their question regarding His parousia, and declares [properly translated], "As the bright shining [the sunlight] cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the parousia [the PRESENCE] of the Son of man be." The sunlight becomes present instantly, yet noiselessly; and it is first discerned by those who are first awake.

Leaving other intermediate features of our Lord's discourse for examination in their appropriate place, we note His second reference to their question regarding His parousia in verses 37 and 39. He says, "As the days of Noah, so shall also the parousia [PRESENCE] of the Son of man be." Notice, that the comparison is not between the coming of Noah and the coming of our Lord, nor between the coming of the flood and the coming of our Lord. The coming of Noah is not referred to at all; neither is the coming of our Lord referred to; for, as already stated, parousia does not mean coming, but presence. The contrast, then, is between the time of the presence of Noah among the people "before the flood," and the time of the presence of Christ in the world, at His second advent, before the fire—the extreme trouble of the Day of the Lord with which this age ends.

And though the people were wicked in Noah's day, before the flood, and will be wicked in the time of our Lord's presence, before the hot fire of trouble comes upon them, yet this is not the point of comparison or likeness to which our Lord refers; for wickedness has abounded in every age. The point of comparison is stated clearly, and is readily seen if we read critically: The people, except the members of Noah's family, were ignorant of the coming storm, and unbelieving as to the testimony of Noah and his family, and hence they "knew not;" and this is the point of comparison. So shall also the PRESENCE of the Son of man be. None but those of the family of God will believe here: others will "know not," until society, as at present organized, begins to melt with the fervent heat of the time of trouble now impending. This is illustrated by the words, "As in the days that were before the flood, they were eating, drinking and marrying [Luke (17:28) adds "planting and building"], until the day Noah entered into the ark, and knew not, . . . so shall also the parousia [the presence] of the Son of man be." In the time of the presence of the Son of man, therefore, the world will go on with its eating, drinking, planting, building and marrying—not mentioned as sinful doings, but as indicative of their ignorance of His presence, and of the trouble that will prevail in the world. This, then, is our Lord's answer to the question of the disciples—What shall be the sign [indication] of thy [parousia] presence and of the end or harvest of the age? In substance, He says: There will be no sign for the worldly masses; they will not know of my presence and the new dispensational changes. Only the few will know, and they will be taught of God (in a way not here explained) before there is any sign (indication) which the worldly could discern.

Luke's account of this same discourse (Luke 17: 26-29), though not in the same words, is in perfect accord. Luke does not use the word parousia, but he expresses this exact thought, saying: "As it was

in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man"—in the days of His presence. Not before His days, nor after His days, but in (during) His days, the world will be eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting and building. These Scriptures, then, clearly teach that our Lord will be present in the end of this age, entirely unknown to the world, and unseen by them.

Though there shall never be another flood to destroy the earth (Gen. 9:11), it is written that the whole earth shall be devoured with the fire of God's jealousy (Zeph. 3:8):—not the literal, physical earth in either case, but the existing order of things in both cases: in the first instance accomplished by drowning all the people except Noah's family; in the last, by burning all except the family of God in the symbolic fire—the great trouble of the Day of the Lord. The faithful children of God shall be counted worthy to escape all those things coming on the earth (Luke 21:36); not necessarily by being taken away from the earth, but possibly by being rendered fire-proof, as in the typical illustration of the three Hebrews who walked in the midst of the fiery furnace heated seven times, on whose garments, even, was not the smell of fire; because one like unto the Son of God was present with them.—Dan. 3:19-25.

Next we will notice Scriptures which teach that many in the Church will, for a time, be ignorant of the Lord's presence, and of the "harvest" and ending of this age, while He is actually present, and the harvest work in progress.

The closing verses of Matt. 24, from verse 42 on, are very significant. In verse 37 our Lord had shown that the world would not know of the parousia of the Son of man; and now He cautions His professed disciples that, unless on their guard, they will be similarly in darkness relative to His parousia. He says, "Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come [erchomai—arrive]." If people were expecting a thief at a

definite time, they would stay awake so as not to be taken unawares: so you should be ever awake, always ready, and always watching for the first evidence of my parousia. In reply to your question, "When shall these things be?" I merely tell you to watch and be ready, and when I arrive, when I am present, I will communicate the fact to all who are watching and faithful, and they only will have any right to know. All others should and must be in outer darkness, and must learn with and as the world—through trouble.

Who, then, [in the "harvest"], is a faithful and wise servant whom his Master shall make* ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed that servant whom his Master on coming [erchomai—when he arrives] shall find so doing. "Verily, I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods"—all the vast storehouse of precious truth shall be opened to such faithful servants, to arm and supply and feed the entire household of faith.

But if the servant's heart is not right, he will say, My Master tarries [has not arrived], and may smite [oppose and contradict] his fellow servants [those who differ with him; those, therefore, who are declaring the opposite—My Lord does not tarry, but has come, is present.] Such may eat and drink with the intemperate [become intoxicated with the spirit of the world], but the Master of that servant will come [Greek, heko—will have arrived] in a day not expected, and in an hour in which that servant is not aware, and will cut him off [from being one of the servants privileged to hand meat in due season to the household], and will appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. [Though not a hypocrite but a genuine servant, he must, because unfaithful and overcharged, have his portion with the hypocrites in the perplexity and trouble coming upon Babylon.] "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

* Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. read "shall make."

The foregoing, carefully examined, clearly teaches us that in the end of this age there will be one class denying that the Lord is present (not denying that He will come sometime, but that He has come), and smiting or harshly opposing those fellow servants who must therefore be teaching the opposite—that the Lord has come. Which is the faithful, truthful servant, and which the one in error, is clearly stated by our Lord. The faithful one whom He finds giving seasonable “meat” will be exalted and given fuller stewardship over the storehouse of truth, with increased ability to bring it forth to the household, while the unfaithful one will be gradually separated and drawn into closer sympathy with the mere professors or hypocrites. And note the fact that the unfaithful is thus cut off, or separated, at a time of which he is not aware—in the harvest time—while His Lord is really present unknown to him, searching for and gathering His jewels.—Matt. 13:30; Psal. 50:5; Mal. 3:17; Matt. 24:31.

We particularize here, merely to show that, in answer to the question of the disciples about signs and evidences of His second presence, our Lord taught that neither the world nor the unfaithful servants would be aware of it, until the intense fire of trouble is at least commenced. And the faithful evidently will see Him present merely by the eye of faith—through the Scriptures written aforetime for their learning, to be apprehended as they become due. Present truths on every subject are parts of “His goods” and treasures new and old which our Lord had laid up for us and now freely gives us.—Matt. 24:45-47.

While thus, by foretold indications, the Lord made ample preparation to enable the Church to recognise His presence when due, though they should not see Him with the natural eye, He also carefully warned us against deceptions which should arise—deceptions which should appear so plausible as to deceive the very elect, if it were possible. But it is not possible, because all the elect give earnest heed

to the warning, and studiously acquaint themselves with the foretold indications of His presence, and are watching for their fulfilment. Those otherwise minded are not of the elect class. Only the overcomers are to reign with the Lord. These deceptions are already in existence, and are deceiving many. But, thank God, the elect are forewarned and forearmed, and shall neither be deceived nor disheartened. Though clouds and darkness are round about Him, they recognise His presence, and rejoice that their deliverance draweth nigh. If any man should say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there [in any particular place], believe it not. And if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth: behold He is in the secret chambers, believe it not; for as [like] the bright shining sunlight, which gradually dawns upon and fills the earth, so shall His presence be. (Matt. 24:23, 26, 27.) It will be manifested as foretold, by the dawning light of truth—truth on every subject, as we now see it so rapidly and gloriously unfolding. A few years more, and the Sun of righteousness will have fully risen with healing in its beams to bless and raise up the death-stricken world.

In view of the evidences presented, we have no hesitation in announcing the heart-cheering intelligence, that the harvest of the Gospel age is upon us, and that the Master is again present as the Chief Reaper—not in the flesh, as in the Jewish harvest, but in power and great glory, as the “highly exalted,” divine Christ whose glorious body is now “the express image of the Father’s person,” though His glorious person is graciously veiled from human sight. He is inaugurating His reign of righteousness; His sickle of truth is separating; He is gathering together into oneness of heart and mind the ripe first-fruits of spiritual Israel; and soon that elect “body” complete shall rule and bless the world.

This announcement with reference to the manner and the attending circumstances of the Lord’s appearing is not given to alarm the world, nor to satisfy idle curiosity, nor to awaken a sleeping

nominal church; but it is given in order that those who are not asleep, and not of the world, but who are awake, consecrated and faithful, and earnest students of their Father's plan, may be informed of the significance of transpiring events, and not be in darkness on a subject and with regard to events in no other way discernible with certainty—the harvest, the presence of the great Reaper, the threshing and sifting of the true wheat, the bundling and burning of the tares in the time of trouble, etc.

SCOFFING FORETOLD.

THE Apostle Peter describes how some of the unfaithful servants and hypocrites will scoff during the presence of the Lord, even as they scoffed in the days of Noah. (2 Pet. 3:3, 4, 10, 12.) Notice that the Apostle wrote to the Church, and that the scoffers he describes are in the nominal church and professedly interested in the Lord's work and plan, and believers, therefore, that He will come some time. The scoffing described is on the very subject here noticed, and such as we hear and shall hear from professed Christians, whenever the subject of the Lord's presence and harvest work, etc., is presented. Christians generally, until they investigate the subject, have such ideas of literal manifestations of fire, trumpets, voices, etc., and of seeing the Lord descending through the air, a shining body of flesh, that when they hear of His invisible presence, without taking time to investigate a subject upon which they feel so sure, busied with worldly plans, and intoxicated with the spirit of the world, they will dismiss the matter quickly as unworthy of investigation.

It is to this class of professed Christians that the Apostle refers, saying, "In the last days [in the closing years of the Gospel age—in the "harvest"] shall come scoffers walking after their own desires [plans, theories, etc.], asking, Where is the promise of his presence [parousia]? for ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as at present from the beginning of creation." When referred

to our Lord's statement (Mat. 24:37-39; Luke 17: 26) that in His days, in the days of His presence, things would indeed continue as before; and that, as in Noah's day, men would be eating, drinking, marrying, planting and building; and that, as then, the world know not of His presence, and read not the signs of the speedy and great changes just at hand, they are too busy to consider the testimony carefully, and only continue to scoff.

Ah! says Peter, they forget the great change which occurred in the days of Noah; and then, under the symbol of fire, he describes the overwhelming flood of trouble which shall shortly overtake the whole world, utterly overthrowing all civil and ecclesiastical rule [the heavens] and melting the entire social fabric [the earth]—producing anarchy and social chaos until the new heavens [ruling powers—the Kingdom of God] shall be fully established, as well as a new earth [society organized on a new and better basis, of love, equality and righteousness].

In verse 10 he assures us that "the Day of the Lord will arrive [Greek, *heko*] as a thief"* [unobservedly, quietly: it will be present, while some are scoffing and smiting those fellow-servants who declare the truth]. The Apostle then exhorts the saints to separateness from the world; that they be not swallowed up by politics, money-getting, etc., but that they set their affections on higher things. He says, Seeing that in God's plan present earthly conditions are only temporary and will soon give place to the better order, what manner of persons ought we to be, in respect of holy conduct and piety?—"looking for the PRESENCE [parousia] of the Day of God"—watching for the evidences (signs) to prove that it has come.

And, thanks be to God, His provision is so abundant that all those of piety, who are looking for that day, will know of it before the full bursting forth of the fire of wrath. Through Paul, He

*Old Manuscripts omit here the words, "in the night."

assures us that none of the children of the light will be left in darkness, that that day should come upon them unawares. (1 Thes. 5:4.) Hence, though we are already in the day of the Lord's presence, and in the beginning of the great fire of trouble, we see that it is even as shown us in symbol (Rev. 7:1, 2)—the storm is held in check until the faithful servants of God are "sealed in their foreheads:" i.e., until such are given an intellectual appreciation of the time, presence, etc., which will not only comfort them, and shield them, but also be a mark, seal or evidence of their sonship, as indicated by our Lord when He promised that the holy Spirit should show to the faithful "things to come."—John 16:13.

Some take Peter's statement literally, that "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and pass away with a great noise;" and also the Revelator's description of the same events, by a very similar symbol, "The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." It would seem, however, that one glance upward at the myriad gems of night shining through millions of miles of space, with nothing between to roll away, or to take fire, should be argument enough in one moment to convince such that they had erred in supposing these statements to be literal—should convince them that their expectation of a literal fulfilment is absurd in the extreme.

So, then, God veiled from mankind under figures of trumpets, voices, fire, etc., information (which was not for the worldly to know, but only for the "little flock" of consecrated saints) regarding the harvest, the Lord's presence, His spiritual kingdom etc.; and yet He arranged them so that, in due time, they would speak clearly and emphatically to the class for whom He intended the information. As at the first advent, so to a similar consecrated class it may now be said, in the time of the second advent—"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in

parables"—in figures and dark sayings—in order that, even though having the Bible before them, others than the consecrated may not really see and understand.—Mark 4:11, 12.

The world is not ignorant of the unprecedented events and circumstances of the present time, and their increasing noteworthiness with every passing year; but not perceiving the grand outcome, these only fill their minds with dark forebodings of evil. As foretold, they are in fear, looking forward to those things that are coming on earth; for already the powers of the heaven (the present ruling powers) are being shaken.

That the Lord must be present, and exercise His great power so as to dash the nations to pieces as a potter's vessel, is clearly indicated; for it is "in the days of these kings" that the God of heaven shall set up His Kingdom. And IT shall break in pieces and consume all these. (Dan. 2:44.) And in harmony with this, we see all about us evidence of the smiting, shaking and overturning of the present powers, preparatory to the establishment of the kingdom "which cannot be moved"—the strong government.

In these days of our Lord's presence, He has been verifying His promise to those in the proper attitude of watchfulness—"Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." (Luke 12:37.) Even so, He has opened unto us the Scriptures, showing us truth concerning His present glorious nature, the object, manner and time of His coming, and the character of His manifestations to the household of faith and to the world. He has drawn our attention to the prophecies which definitely locate us on the stream of time, and has shown us the order of His plan of operations in this harvest time. He has shown us, first of all, that it is a harvest of the saints, a time for their full ripening, and

for their separation from the tares; and secondly, that it is a time for the world to reap its whirlwind harvest—for the reaping of the vine of the earth, and the treading of its fruitage in the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God.

But the reader must not expect to have passages of Scripture pointed out in which these matters are plainly written. On the contrary, he must bear in mind that all these things have been hidden by the Lord, in such manner that they could not be understood or appreciated until the due time had come, and then only by His earnest, faithful children, who esteem truth as more precious than rubies, and who are willing to seek it as men search for silver. Truth, like silver, must be not only mined, but also refined, separated from dross, before its value can be appreciated. While many may prefer to take a statement without the trouble of verifying it from the Scriptures, this will not be the case with the real truth-seeker. He must, so far as possible, make every point, argument and proof his own, direct from God's Word, by tracing all the connections, and thus convincing himself of the truthfulness of the account presented.

Though the Lord provides it, and the servants bring forth the "meat in due season for the household," yet each, to be strengthened thereby, must eat for himself.

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