

APRIL, 1935
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The DAWN

**Our Lord's Second Presence
Origin of the Sacred Scriptures**

THE MORNING STAR OF THE RESURRECTION

Contents

Issue of April 1935

OUR LORD'S SECOND PRESENCE	2
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE	
The Morning Star of the Resurrection	23
ORIGIN of the Sacred Scriptures	26
INTERNAT'AL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS	
The Resurrection	29
The Holy Scriptures	30
Sin, Repentance and Faith	30

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CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chicago Quarterly Convention, April 7. Information received from the Chicago brethren indicates that Brother G. M. Wilson, of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Brother Julian T. Gray, of Cincinnati, Ohio, are expected to serve at this gathering. Meetings all day at 910 La Salle Street.

Plainfield, N. J., April 7. All sessions of this convention will be held at 12 Madison Avenue. An interesting program has been arranged, and all believers in the ransom are invited to attend.

Wilmington, Del., April 14. This is the annual pre-memorial gathering at Wilmington, and the friends are expecting a blessed feast this year. All sessions will be held in Jr. O. U. A. M. Hall, 907 Tatnall Street. The convention opens at 9:30 in the morning and the first discourse will be at 10:00 o'clock. Friends are expected from a wide area.

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The listing of speakers does not imply at all that those listed endorse the various articles appearing in THE DAWN, or are in any way connected with the work of THE DAWN.

With the exception of conventions, this service will be limited to appointments outside of the speaker's home class. All appointments should reach us not later than the 20th of the month.

BROTHER W. T. BAKER

Plainfield, N. J., April 7
(Convention, see announcement)

BROTHER B. BOULTER

Springfield, Mass., April 28

BROTHER C. P. BRIDGES

Boston, Mass., April 14
New Bedford, Mass., 19-21
(Convention, see announcement)

BROTHER JOHN DAWSON

Philadelphia, Pa., April 7

BROTHER J. H. HOEVELER

Chester, Pa., April 27
Wilmington, Del., 28
Philadelphia, Pa., 28

BROTHER EMIL HERRSCHER

Tacoma, Wash., April 1
Seattle, Wash., 2, 3
Bellingham, Wash., 4
Lynden, Wash., 5
Vancouver, B. C., 6, 7
Victoria, B. C., 9, 10

BROTHER W. F. HUDGINGS

Plainfield, N. J., April 7
(Convention, see announcement)
Wilmington, Del., 14
(Convention, see announcement)
Richmond Hill, N. Y., 28
(Convention, see announcement)

BROTHER JOHN HUTCHINSON

Easton, Pa., April 14
Chester, Pa., 20
Pottstown, Pa., 21
Wilmington, Del., 21

BROTHER O. MAGNUSON

Wilmington, Del., April 14
(Convention, see announcement)
New Bedford, Mass., 19-21
(Convention, see announcement)

BROTHER J. G. KUEHN

Philadelphia, Pa., April 21

BROTHER C. W. MCCOY

Cheney, Wash., April 14

BROTHER J. W. REIMER

Hartford, Conn., April 21

BROTHER WALTER SARGEANT

Plainfield, N. J., April 7
(Convention, see announcement)
New Bedford, Mass., April 19-21
(Convention, see announcement)
Richmond Hill, N. Y., 28
(Convention, see announcement)

BROTHER J. I. VAN HORN

Duquesne, Pa., April 7

BROTHER G. M. WILSON

Chicago, Ill., April 7
(Convention, see announcement)

BROTHER W. N. WOODWORTH

Wilmington, Del., April 19-21
(Convention, see announcement)
New Bedford, Mass., 19-21
(Convention, see announcement)

New Bedford, Mass., April 19-21. This three-day gathering will be held in Cornell Hall, 736 Pleasant Street (opposite New Bedford Hotel). A varied and interesting program is being arranged. For particulars, address, Mr. W. W. Greaves, 25 Social Street, New Bedford, Mass.

Greenfield, Ohio, April 28. This gathering will be held in O. N. G. Armory, Second and Jefferson Streets. Meetings begin in the morning. At 3 P. M. there will be a public meeting addressed by Brother A. P. Johnson, of Columbus. All friends in surrounding territory are invited. Sponsored by the Cincinnati Ecclesia.

Richmond Hill, L. I., April 28. This one-day convention is sponsored by the Brooklyn Ecclesia of Associated Bible Students. All sessions will be held in the Casino Hall, 113-18 Liberty Avenue, Richmond Hill, L. I.

Pittsburgh, Pa., May 5. This convention will be held in the regular meeting place of the Pittsburgh Ecclesia of Associated Bible Students; which is the O. of I. A. Temple, 610 Arch Street, N. S. Pittsburgh, Pa. Opening session will be at 10:00 A. M., and meetings will continue all day. Lunch will be provided, both at noon and in the evening, for all attending the convention.

Lynn, Mass., June 29, 30. Further information concerning the Lynn convention will be published later.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Memorial Supper in Brooklyn, April 16. The Brooklyn Ecclesia of Associated Bible Students will celebrate the Memorial Supper this year in their regular meeting place. This is the Lecture Room of the Church of the Pilgrims, corner of Henry and Remson Streets, Brooklyn, N. Y. A cordial invitation is extended to all the consecrated to take part in this service. It is appropriate to continue this yearly memorial of our Lord's death until we are actually united with Him in the glory of the Kingdom.

Free Tracts. We are in a position to supply free tracts on a number of subjects. A new edition of the tract, "Earth's Coming Glory," has recently been printed. Order as many as you can judiciously use.

(Additional Announcements on page 33)



Vol. 3, No. 7

APRIL, 1935

One Dollar a Year

A TIMELY TOPIC

BEGINNING on the next page the editors of THE DAWN present an outline of what for many years has been considered by thousands of earnest students of the Bible to be the truth concerning the object, manner and time of our Lord's second advent. While the article is much longer than we usually publish, yet it covers only a part of what could be said on this extremely important and timely subject. We have deemed it best to publish the entire article in one issue rather than in serial form, believing that many may want to pass the "good news" on to others; and for this reason will find it a great convenience to have it all together.

There are a number of points in the article which we have not attempted to discuss in detail. For example, on pages 9-11 mention is made of the great revealment of truth that has come to earnest Bible students in these "last days." We have offered no proof to substantiate the points of truth mentioned. A thorough discussion of these precious doctrines will be found in that wonderful set of "Bible Keys" known as "Studies in the Scripture," to which we are indebted for all the Scriptural facts set forth in the article.

Reference is also made (pages 11, 12) to the foretold antichrist system, and a statement made as to its identification. Those not fully acquainted with the facts concerning this matter will find the subject Scripturally set forth in chapter IX of volume 2 of the "Scripture Studies" series.

The 1335 days of Daniel 12, referred to on page 10 of the article are fully explained in chapter III, volume 3 of "Scripture Studies."

We lack space in this article to discuss the chronological evidence that we are in the "days of the Son of man," nor can we here enumerate in detail the manner in which each and all of the many "signs of the times" are now being fulfilled. But these facts have been published and are well known to most of our readers.

It seems to us that even if we had no chronology to tell us where we are on the stream of time, the present marked fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy alone should be sufficient to show us that we have come to the "time of the end." (Dan. 12.) The present 'running to and fro,' the modern 'increase in knowledge,' and the successive 'spasms' of the greatest 'time of trouble the world has ever seen since there was a nation,' are tangible facts that cannot be gainsaid. All of these are peculiar to our day—previous generations never witnessed them. And remember, Jesus, in His own great prophecy of Matthew 24, placed His personal stamp of approval upon Daniel's prophecy. If modern conditions do not fulfil Daniel's prophecy we cannot imagine what else could fulfil it.

From a European correspondent we quote the following on this point:

"First in 1914 (the end of the 'Gentile Times') the then present Lord permits the World War to break out. With this He wrenched all power and control of the situation out of the hands of earthly governments. They did not *reign* any longer—they were now *driven*. Then, the crowned heads in consequence lose their crowns; first the Czar of Russia, then William the II with about 17 German confederate princes, then Charles the V of Austria, then Greece, Bulgaria, Spain, Turkey, and Italy, which now is only nominally a kingdom. Should this toppling of crowns not mean anything to us? Should it not mean that He has come whose right it is?"

In the study of the following article we urge upon all a careful comparison with all that the Bible has to say on the matter; and we again remind our readers that the Bible should always be taken as the final authority. If what we have presented squares with the Scriptural testimony as a whole, accept it, and rejoice in it. Our hope is that it will encourage many to a renewal of their vows of consecration to God.

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

15 And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time.
16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:
17 That in blessing I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;
18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.
Gen. 22:15-18 Gal. 3:8
8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
Gen. 22:18 Gal. 3:8

20 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
Lu. 2:10
20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:
21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.
Acts 3:20, 21

20 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
Gal. 3:26, 29

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.
9 And he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.
Heb. 11:8, 10

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.
4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.
5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new, and he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.
Rev. 21:2-5

OUR LORD'S SECOND PRESENCE

*"And if I go ... I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
—John 14:3.*



WHEN Jesus addressed the momentous words of our text to His troubled disciples shortly before His death, they could not then comprehend all that was involved in the announced departure and coming again of their blessed Master. But they appreciated that He was the Messiah of promise; hence naturally they had been expecting that He would at once proceed to establish His foretold Messianic Kingdom upon the earth, and that through it He would presently fulfil all the prophetic promises concerning Israel's and earth's coming glory.

With all this in mind the sudden announcement of His going away, later to return and gather them unto Himself, was most perplexing and bewildering. They wondered, What could our Master mean by these strange words? And it was not until two months later, when the holy spirit came upon these waiting disciples at Pentecost, that they began to grasp with some degree of clearness that Jesus' going away and coming again constitute essential features of the divine plan for human redemption and deliverance.

Truth versus Superstition

Ever since Pentecost the second coming of Christ has continued to be a very vital part of every true Christian's cherished hope. But, even as with many other important doctrines of the Bible, this blessed expectation of Christ's return has been beclouded in the minds of many, by the introduction of various superstitious theories which have tended to make His sure promises appear fantastic or ridiculous. Many superstitions became associated with this and other precious Christian doctrines during that dismal time which we now look back upon as the "dark ages." During that long period of more than a thousand years few persons were able to read. Anyway, but few manuscripts of the Bible were then in existence; and furthermore, it was declared by the Catholic church in those days to be a crime to even possess a

copy of it without special papal dispensation—much less to read it freely and to be daily blessed by its heart-cheering teachings.

Knowledge along all lines was limited and inaccurate during those centuries. Even the "learned" of that period contended that the earth is flat, and that the starry dome of heaven is a roof doubtless suspended in the air by four massive pillars resting on the "four corners" of the earth. With such limited knowledge of God's universe, it was but natural that the religious conceptions of the ignorant should also take absurd and childish forms. And no Biblical teaching suffered more from these superstitious influences than did the doctrine of the second coming of Christ.

With the earth generally regarded as a relatively small, flat area, and the starry heavens viewed each night as a rigid fanciful roof over us, it was natural for people then to conclude that just beyond that roof exists the place called heaven, where God dwells, and that at really any moment might come the "crack of doom" for this earth and most of its inhabitants, as Jesus may come crashing through the "roof" and snatch up His faithful followers unto Himself, and then set the earth and the heavens on fire—thus making an "end of time" and of all things earthly, and ushering in the beginning of "eternity."

Superstition Excusable During Dark Ages

We should not harshly ridicule our forefathers for holding and advocating such childish conceptions of our great God and His beloved Son. Nor are they to be blamed for misapplying certain symbolic statements of the Bible, such as "every eye shall see Him," in their effort to support such superstitions. They did not know that the twinkling stars of the heavens are in reality great planets, most of them many times larger than our little earth, and that many of them actually are thousands of light-years distant from us.

People did not then know that the earth is round, that it is revolving on its axis, making a complete rev-

olution every twenty-four hours, hence, that if Jesus did literally appear in the sky, so that every physical eye could see Him, it would be necessary for Him to remain there in a fixed position in space for at least twenty-four hours before even all the people within one narrow zone of visibility could have an opportunity to catch a short glimpse of Him; and that He then would need to assume many hundreds of other such fixed positions on successive days, each time waiting there for the earth to make one complete revolution, before "every eye" could thus literally behold Him. Yet superstition enabled people to believe that Jesus would literally reveal Himself to "every eye," instantaneously and simultaneously. True, divine power may be capable of performing a miracle of this kind, but a proper understanding of the Bible teaching on this subject does not suggest any such paradoxical procedure on God's part.

Our forefathers believed also that at the instant when Jesus would appear up in the sky, the earth would spontaneously become a hissing mass of burning elements, which would reduce the entire planet to cinders in the brief space of one twenty-four-hour day, or even less. Thus again, *symbolic* statements of the Bible were misused to "prove" absurd hallucinations. They did not know that in the long ago the earth was in a molten condition for a long period of time, being then many times hotter than any fire man has ever known, yet it was not "burned up." Nor did they know that if God really should destroy that starry "roof" over their heads it would mean the total destruction of the entire universe.

Saner Views Now Possible

Students of the Bible now have many advantages over those of the distant past. The Bible today can be had in almost every known tongue. Greek and Hebrew concordances also are available for the use of all, so that even the humblest student may now study the meaning of the original words in which the Bible manuscripts were written. Fundamental scientific facts concerning the earth and the universe are also the common property of the masses today. With these increased advantages the student of God's Word now is able to acquire a reasonable, soul-satisfying understanding of the time, manner and purpose of our Lord's return, such as was not possible in former days.

The second coming of Christ is one of the important features of God's plan for human redemption and salvation; hence it would be impossible to have a clear conception of just what it involves, unless we also understand the whole plan of God. It also is necessary to keep in mind, when studying this and other important doctrines of the Bible, that many of its most precious teachings are ingeniously set forth in pictorial and symbolic language. For example, when we read in Revelation 21:3 that "the tabernacle of God is with men," we do not think of interpreting it to mean that God will literally come to earth as a man and build a literal tabernacle or tent and dwell as an ordinary neighbor among the human family! This is a symbolism, and it conveys the precious

thought of God's ultimately returning favor to the whole world of mankind.

Bible Symbolism is Meaningful

The symbolisms of the Bible are not difficult to understand when studied in harmony with the divine plan of the ages; but to attempt a literal interpretation of any of them in our study of the Bible will lead to meaningless or absurdly visionary conclusions. This is especially true in connection with the doctrine of Christ's second coming. For example, Paul declares that Jesus will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." (1 Th. 4:16.) A literal view of these words would make the second coming of Christ a most fantastic event, actually bordering on the burlesque. Besides, such a literal interpretation of the text would make it inconsistent with other Scriptures.

When Jesus left the earth He did so in a very quiet, dignified manner. Only His immediate disciples were aware of the fact of His going. Immediately after He had disappeared from their sight an angel appeared and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? 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." (Acts 1:11.) If this statement is literally true, then Paul's prophecy that Jesus would descend from heaven with a "shout," with the "voice of the archangel," and with the "trump of God," could not also be literally true; because when Jesus went away He did not blow a trumpet, He did not shout, and there was no departing voice of the archangel.

In Revelation 1:7, already alluded to, is found another description of Jesus' second coming. There it is said that "He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." This text also states that "all the kindreds of the earth shall mourn because of Him." How different this is from either of the foregoing texts which we have cited! It is only as we study all of these prophecies in the light of the general symbolisms of the Bible that they prove to be gloriously harmonious and soul-satisfying; giving us a reasonable and rational conception of our Lord's return as well as of the great Kingdom of blessing which He will then establish upon the earth. These and other unusual texts concerning Christ's second coming will be examined as we proceed.

Why Does Christ Come Again?

We have mentioned that if one seeks a correct understanding of our Lord's return, it is necessary for him to remember that this great event is a component part of God's general plan for man's redemption from sin and death. In order to more fully appreciate this, let us consider briefly some of the important facts concerning the original creation and fall of man. Not only does the Lord assure us that He comes "to seek and to save that which was lost," but the Apostle Peter also declares that Jesus returns in order to usher in "times of restitution." (Acts 3:19:21.) Hence we want to know just what is to be restituted or restored when Jesus returns. This takes us back

to the Genesis account of Creation and to man's experience in the Garden of Eden.

According to the Bible man was not created to be an angel, but an *earthly* being—formed of “the dust of the ground.” He was the highest order of God's earthly creatures, and was made in the moral image of his Creator. The Scriptures reveal also that a fair test of obedience was placed upon the perfect man Adam, and that he failed under that temptation, which caused the loss of his perfect home in Eden and even life itself. We can see, then, that the “restitution” to be accomplished at Jesus' second coming means that the fallen race will have this forfeited Edenic heritage restored to them.—Ezek. 36:35.

But there is another important point to be considered in connection with the fall of man. The record reveals that in connection with man's disobedience to divine law a “serpent” exercised a seductive influence. In Revelation 20:2 this “old serpent” is identified as Satan, the Devil. In Ezekiel 28:13-15 the prophet suggests that before Satan fell—before “iniquity was found in him”—he was appointed to be a spiritual overseer in Eden. In Isaiah 14 this same mighty being is called Lucifer; and it is there pointed out that his chief iniquity consisted of the fact that he selfishly aspired to a position of headship in God's universe which had not been given to him; in fact, he wanted to be “like the Most High” Himself. Not only did Lucifer, a chief one in the spirit realm, thus defect; but other angels also joined him in sinful rebellion against God.

Fallen Spirits Now Influence Men

This is not impossible to grasp, when we recognize the fact—which the Bible makes very clear—that long before man was created God had brought into being many orders of angelic or spirit creatures. These were of a higher order of creation than man. Man, according to the inspired record, was made “a little lower than the angels.” (Psalm 8.) Now the Scriptures also indicate clearly that these spirit creatures are able to exercise a certain influence over the affairs of human beings. Had Lucifer and all others of the angelic hosts remained in harmony with God, their influence would always have been beneficial and in fullest harmony with righteousness.

Even now the remaining loyal or holy angels are given a special charge over the people of God. Says the apostle, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:14.) When Jesus was being crucified He declared to His enemies that if He wished to do so He could obtain the assistance of more than “twelve legions of angels.” Of course, all spirit beings, holy and unholy, are invisible to human eyes.

Now the fallen Lucifer, and a host of other fallen angels with him, have, since the days of Eden, continued to exercise a potent influence over the affairs of men; but that influence has always been a baneful one, leading away from God and in the direction of unrighteousness, selfishness and death. While Satan and his associates have made many *direct* contacts

with mankind down through the ages—as is evidenced, for example, in the case of King Saul and the Witch of Endor—yet their wicked influence more often has been exerted in a more subtle manner; and always it leads away from God and divine truth.

It is because Satan has continued to exercise his *invisible* power over the affairs of men that Jesus refers to him as the “prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30.) The Apostle Paul also refers to this same mighty evil spirit being, calling him “the god of this world,” and says that he has “blinded the minds of them which believe not.” (2 Cor. 4:4.) The Apostle Peter likewise declares that “your adversary the devil walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith.” (1 Pet. 5:8,9.) Since Satan's influence is an invisible one, the only method by which God's people can resist him is by being “steadfast in the faith,” even as Peter suggests.

The foregoing brief Scriptural summary will suffice to show that the world of mankind now lives under an invisible baneful influence, emanating from a higher, more intelligent and more powerful order of beings than themselves. This of course does not mean that man has no responsibility for his own conduct. Indeed, he has been given a *will* with which to resist evil and to do right, if he desires to use it. This was fully the case with the original, perfect man in Eden; and is still true of his posterity to the extent that they let the light of divine truth enter their hearts and minds and show them the way of righteousness.

Releasing Man from His Dilemma

Having noted, according to the Scriptures—and being fully substantiated by human experience—that for ages past mankind has been under a subtle, invisible influence far superior to his own; one that is selfish, unrighteous and Satanic; let us now examine the cheering Scriptural testimony concerning God's provision ultimately to supplant this present rule of evil with one of righteousness.

The first baneful effect of the fallen Lucifer's wicked influence in Eden was his inducing of the first human pair to disobey the Creator's law of life. This brought upon man the immediate sentence of death. Therefore, in preparing to “bruise the serpent's head,” as the Lord promised to do (Gen. 3:15), and to restore man to his lost estate, it is essential for the penalty of death to be set aside by the payment of a *ransom* or corresponding price. It was for this purpose that the pre-human *Logos*—a still more powerful spirit being than Lucifer, and the first of God's creation—came into the world and was “made flesh.” In Hebrews 10:5 we are informed that this Ransomer's body of flesh was prepared for the purpose of sacrifice. And again, in Hebrews 2:14, we are told that Jesus was made flesh that through death “He might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil.”

The Scriptures are very clear that our Risen Lord will yet become earth's new king or ruler, who will

supplant the wicked Lucifer who is the present "god of this world." The Scriptures also show that Jesus' first visit to earth, as a man, was not for the purpose of becoming its ruler immediately. Rather, He came to suffer and die, that He may pay the penalty of death that had been imposed upon the human race back in Eden. And with His work of sacrifice completed, it would not be reasonable to expect that He would ever take back His sacrificed human nature, and return to the earth as a *man*. But we do not need to depend upon mere human reasoning on this point, for the Bible states plainly that at the time of His resurrection Jesus was highly exalted to the *divine* nature; and He Himself said that after His exaltation "the world seeth Me *no more*." (John 14:19.) No human being will ever "see Him as He is," but His church will have this privilege after their glorification.

He Exalteth the Humble

The Apostle Paul tells us that because Jesus was faithful in humbling Himself unto death, "even the death of the cross," that God has "highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—Phil. 2:9-11.

In Ephesians 2:19-21 Paul again refers to the high exaltation of Jesus at the time of His resurrection, saying, "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (of which Satan is the prince), but also in that which is to come."

In 1st Corinthians 15 Paul mentions that this exaltation of Jesus, as well as of His church, involves a *change of nature*; and he clinches the point by saying that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (Verse 50.) In Romans 8:29 the apostle refers to this spirit resurrection as a new *birth*, and declares that Jesus was the "*firstborn* among many brethren." In our Lord's well-known conversation with Nicodemus He said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is *born of the spirit*."—John 3:8.

The combined testimony of the foregoing Scriptures proves beyond all reasonable doubt that at the time of Jesus' resurrection He became a powerful spirit being of the highest order—the divine nature—which means that now His activities are invisible to man. The Scripture last quoted is especially significant; showing, as it does, that the *presence* of a spirit being may be recognized, not by *natural, physical sight* but by *the things which it does*—even as we can see only the *effects* of the wind but not the wind itself.

Invisible Rulership

Now it is this highly exalted, glorified Jesus who is to become the new spiritual Ruler of the world, completely supplanting Satan, the present invisible "god of this world." As Satan has been "present" in the earth all down through the ages, yet invisible to man, so also Jesus' rulership over the earth will be an invisible one so far as human beings are concerned. As there have been many other spirit beings—the fallen angels—associated with Satan in his nefarious rule, so Jesus also will have associates in His Messianic reign. (Rev. 5:10; 20:6.) Jesus' associates, or joint-heirs, will be His glorified church, composed of those from among men who have followed faithfully in His footsteps of sacrifice "even unto death." These also must experience a change of nature, as the Bible makes clear—they also must be "born again." It is these spiritual promises, made exclusively to the church, that have been misappropriated and used as a basis for the erroneous popular belief that all good people go immediately to heaven when they die.

The unholy, invisible influence of Satan and the fallen angels is often exercised through the medium of human representatives. Satan always has found ready instruments who volunteer to do his bidding; and he also has deceived and coerced many others into carrying out his wicked designs. So also the rule of the Christ—Jesus the Head and the church, His body—when all the members have been changed and made partakers of the divine nature with Him, will be exercised through human agencies. The operation of these two otherwise contrasting kingdoms are thus seen to be similar in manner of administration, though directly opposite in character and objective. The honored agents of the glorified Christ will not be bound and made slaves by ignorance and weakness, like those of Satan; but will be perfect, and will act intelligently and harmoniously, from choice and from love; and their appointments will be given as equitable rewards for righteousness.

"Princes in All the Earth"

Nor are we left in doubt as to who these earthly representatives of the invisible Christ shall be. At the time of Jesus' first advent the rabbinical scribes and Pharisees, who "sat in Moses' seat," were looked upon by the people as visible representatives of God—the ones to whom He would have them look for instruction in righteousness. But these unfaithful religious teachers opposed and rejected Jesus as the Messiah; and they were told by the Master that they would lose their positions in God's arrangement, and that others would take their places at the time of the establishment of the Kingdom. He said: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom, and you yourselves (the Pharisees, to whom these words were addressed) thrust out (from your position of teachers)."—Luke 13:28.

In Psalm 45:16 this "ancient worthy" class of human teachers on earth during the Kingdom, are

referred to as the "children" of the Christ, and the statement is made that they shall become "princes in all the earth." How wonderful, that for four thousand years, unknown to man, God was preparing these teachers and statesmen through whom He would administer His promised Kingdom blessings! At the present time these faithful ones—the "ancient worthies"—are still "sleeping" in death; but in due time they will be awakened and will take their appointed places among the peoples of the earth. But this awakening of the *visible* "princes" cannot take place until the spiritual, *invisible* "kings and priests" the church class—have all been "made ready," and have entered into their promised glory. Paul refers to the ancient worthies as a special class, and praises their faithfulness; but then adds that God has "provided some better things for us (the spiritual Christ company), that they (the ancient worthies) without us should not be made perfect."—Heb. 11:40.

Restitution for Jacob and for All

In Isaiah 29:22-24 reference is made to some of the details of the Kingdom work. We quote: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of Mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify My name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine."

The foregoing passage, written centuries after Jacob died, shows that he will be alive and active in the Kingdom; that his face then shall not wax pale with old age, as it did previously; also that he will see his children from whom death separated him; and that because of this miraculous demonstration of divine power through the Christ, they, the people, shall fear and sanctify God's name; yea, "they also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." How clearly thus does the prophet connect the future education of the people in righteousness with the return of the ancient worthies to life upon the earth!

To sum up briefly, then: It seems clear from the Scriptures that the second presence of Christ upon the earth was to be invisible to the human eye, that He would come as the great and powerful spiritual ruler of earth, and that His Kingdom's influences for the blessing of the world will operate through the resurrected "ancient worthies," whom He will then make "princes in all the earth." The purpose of His second coming is likewise clearly stated in the Scriptures. As we have noted briefly, He comes to establish the Kingdom for which He taught His disciples to pray, in order that through this Kingdom arrangement the world of mankind may have the opportunity of being restored to life and happiness.

II

An error, commonly believed by many, is that there is not much use to try to read the "signs of the times"

relative to Christ's return to earth, because, say they, 'We will never be able to know anything about it anyway!' In support of this popular error the following words of Jesus are often quoted: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only." A casual reading of this text, apart from its context, may seem to suggest that there would be little use in trying to find out anything about the signs that would mark the return of Christ. But let us examine the passage a little more carefully.

The text states that not only men, but the angels also, did not know anything about the time of Christ's second coming. And this is not all! In Mark's account of what Jesus said, he adds, "neither the Son." (Mark 13:32.) This latter statement calls for an explanation, because surely Christ Himself would need to know something about the time of His own coming. What then does the text mean? Simply this, that at the time these words were spoken, no man knew, no angel knew, and not even Jesus Himself. But it does not mean that they would never know. This text is a part of Jesus' answer to His disciples' questions concerning the time of His second presence and of the end of the age. Jesus did not rebuke them for asking such questions. Indeed, He mentioned many signs whereby His followers may be able to know when the period of His presence arrives; but He wanted them to know that the Father had not yet revealed even to Him the exact *time* when those signs would appear. Yet He indicated that the very appearance of the signs themselves would make the matter plain at the appointed season, and said that His followers at that time should lift up their heads, knowing that their "redemption draweth nigh."—Luke 21:28, 31.

"Parousia" and "Aion"

Much confusion has arisen concerning the manner and object of Christ's return, because of a mistranslation of two Greek words in Jesus' prophecy, of which the foregoing text from Mark is a part. One of the words is *parousia*, which means "presence," but is mistranslated "coming"; and the other is *aion*, which means "age," but is mistranslated "world." The translators of the Common Version of the Bible were not wholly to blame for rendering these two words incorrectly, because they believed in the old superstition that our Lord's return will be for the primary purpose of destroying the literal earth. To them the exact moment of Jesus' arrival would be the "crack of doom" for all things earthly; hence they felt that the Greek words *parousia* and *aion* should be translated in a free manner that would tend to substantiate this childish notion.

The Emphatic Diaglott renders *parousia* as "presence," which manifestly is the correct translation, because the Apostle Paul so uses it in Philippians 2:12, saying, "wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my *presence* (*parousia*) only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." No twist of the imagination could make this text mean anything, if

the word "coming" were substituted for "presence," to translate the Greek word *parousia* as used here by the apostle; for he is contrasting his *presence* and his *absence*. Certainly Paul, being the scholar that he was, knew the proper Greek word to select.

Paul again uses the word *parousia* in 2 Corinthians 10: 10, where he says: "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily *presence* (*parousia*) is weak, and his speech contemptible." Here also if we should substitute the word "coming" it would be entirely out of place, and would signally fail to express the thought the apostle had in mind; for it is Paul's *personal presence* among the brethren, not his future "coming" that is here referred to.

Thus we see that in the two texts just quoted, the inspired apostle has furnished us with the true definition of the word *parousia*, by applying it to simple circumstances which our finite minds cannot fail to understand. Hence, reasoning from this readily understood application of the word, to the personal abiding "presence" of a human being among other human beings, and then applying this same word *parousia* to the glorified, divine and invisible Christ, it is clearly seen that Jesus' use of this word in His great prophecy concerning the end of the age is intended to be descriptive of a period of time during which He would be actually *present* upon the earth, and that the only ones who at first would know about it would be those who are able to read the "signs" which He and other inspired writers of the Bible have given us for that very purpose.

"When Shall These Things Be?"

In our Lord's great prophecy of Matthew 24, He is answering three direct questions put to Him by His disciples. "Tell us," they entreated, "when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy *presence* (*parousia*), and of the end of the *age* (*aion*)?" (Matt. 24: 3.) Prof. James Strong tells us that the Jewish interpretation of the words "end of the *aion*," is the 'Messianic period.' The early Christian disciples were Jews; and it is evident that in addition to wanting to know when Satan's rule of selfishness and death would end, they also were enquiring about the evidence of the promised Messianic Kingdom. They had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, and it was quite confusing to them why He should go away and come again, instead of setting up His promised Kingdom immediately. On the other hand, they knew that few indeed recognized Him as the Messiah in their day, and they of course wondered how He would be recognized as such when He came the second time. This is why they asked for "signs."

In addition to asking for "signs" of His presence, they also asked about the *time* of the Lord's return: "When shall these things be?" It was while answering this part of the question that Jesus told them that no one at that time knew exactly *when* it would be; that He Himself did not know; that that was information which the Heavenly Father was still keeping strictly in His own power. But Jesus did proceed to give His disciples many "signs" to look for, where-

by they who would be living at that time may know when the period actually does arrive. Thus He encouraged all to be always on the alert, watching, trying to read the signs of the times, lest His *parousia* may begin and they would not know it. To illustrate this point He said:

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man be." The comparison here is not between two instantaneous events, but between two *periods*—the time during which Noah was present and preparing the ark, and the time during which Jesus will be present, prior to the full end of the existing order of things, which ending was typified by the flood. Luke's account of this same discourse of Jesus is even more specific on this point. He says, "And as it was in the *days of Noe*, so shall it also be in the *DAYS of the Son of man*."—Luke 17: 26.

"Ye Brethren are Not in Darkness"

The general public in Noah's day did not know or believe that a flood actually was coming, although Noah was present among them and preaching to them, and building the ark in order to be prepared for the coming deluge. Only Noah's family believed, and they cooperated with Him in the preparation work. So it would be at the end of the age, during the period of Christ's *presence*: the world would not know about it, but the faithful believers would know, because they would be watchers, eager and able to read the signs which Jesus gave us.

The Apostle Paul's inspired comments on the events of the "day of the Lord"—"the *days of the Son of man*"—leave no doubt as to the proper understanding of Jesus' words. He shows that that which comes suddenly upon the world at that time is the "destruction" of the old order, even as it was the flood that destroyed the world in Noah's day. We quote:

"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the *day of the Lord* (His *parousia*) so cometh as a thief in the night (when the world is least expecting Him). For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction shall come upon them (the world) *as travail* upon a woman with child (in successive spasms of trouble); and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are *not in darkness*, that that day should *overtake you as a thief*. Ye are the children of the light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us *watch* and be sober."—1 Thes. 5: 1-6.

It would seem difficult to refute the thought, so plainly stated in the foregoing passage, that the "brethren" in Christ would *know* of the "times and seasons" relative to the "day of the Lord." And Paul explains why that is so; it is because they would

be *watching*. The illustration is that of a sentinel standing on guard at night. It is his duty to know of the arrival of a thief, and to sound a warning; even though others sleep on and know not what is taking place. Paul predicted that all true "brethren" would have their hearts and affections centered on the approaching day, and would be watching for evidence of its dawning; and because of this they would know, far in advance of the world, that "the night is far spent," and that "the day is at hand."

The Apostle Peter (2 Peter 3) adds his testimony to show that the flood illustrates the destruction of the symbolic world which is to take place in the "last days," and as a result of the parousia of Christ. The coming and presence of Christ—the "days of the Son of man"—precede the foretold destruction. It is during this period that "ye brethren are not in darkness," if "ready"—not sleeping as do others.

The Light From the East

Jesus used this same symbolism when describing the manner in which His presence would be revealed, first to His followers and finally to all the world. He said: "For as the brightshining (*astrape*) cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man be." (Matt. 24:27.) In the Common Version the Greek word *astrape*, used in this text, is translated "lightning." In this particular instance, however, the word "brightshining" undoubtedly would have been a better translation. Lightning does not usually come out of the *east* and shine *westward*, but the sun does. Prof. Strong gives "brightshining" as one of the proper translations of the word. The same word is also used in the New Testament to describe the brightshining of a candle.

A peculiarity of the Greek language is that sometimes the exact meaning of certain words is left to be determined from the context; and the foregoing text is an example of this. There is no specific Greek word for "sunshine," although, of course, there is a word for the sun itself. One is supposed to know that the sun *shines*, without being definitely told that it does. Now this word *astrape*, meaning brightshining, or a glare of light, was aptly used by Jesus to illustrate the effect of His second presence (*parousia*) upon the earth, which He likens to the daily rising of the sun. He indeed is described by the prophet as "the sun of righteousness." (Mal. 4:2) When the sun rises there is a gradual diffusion of light, starting from the east, continuing and increasing until it reaches even unto the west. There is no other glare of light or brightshining, except that of the sun, that fits this picture.

This word *astrape* is also properly applied to the light produced by electrical disturbances within the atmosphere, but when so used the context always determines such meaning; for example, by using it in connection with thunder. In other words, *astrape* simply means "brightness," and that which produces the brightness must be determined by the context—whether it be electrical disturbances, a burning candle,

or the sun. Again, we may mention that the translators of our English Common Version are not to be harshly condemned for their faulty translation of the word *astrape* in Matt. 24:27; because they were accustomed to the erroneous belief that immediately when Jesus returns, the whole heavens and earth would suddenly begin to burn up and spectacularly come to an end. With this superstitious theology in their minds the word lightning seemed to be an appropriate English word by which to translate the *astrape* of this text.

Over and over again, in both the Old and New Testaments, the arrival, presence and work of the Messiah is compared to the increasing light of a natural day; even as when Malachi declares, "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings." (Mal. 4:2.) To fully appreciate this illustration, the *purpose* of our Lord's return should be remembered; namely, that He comes to establish a Kingdom of restitution blessings, which is to rule over the earth for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:1-6.) His presence, therefore, really will continue all through that long period of time. Eventually the whole world shall know about this "Sun of righteousness"; but in the early beginning of the day, only those who "look for Him" would be able to detect the first gray streaks of dawn.

Gradual Light, Not Sudden Glare

It has been argued by some that if Jesus meant the brightshining of the sun, in Matthew 24:27, He would have used the Greek word *lamprotes*, which, in Acts 26:13, is translated "brightness." It is an interesting fact that another form of this same Greek word (*lampo*) is used in Luke's account of this narrative. We quote Luke 17:34—"For as the lightening, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, *shineth* (*lampo*) unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day." It is also noteworthy that the Greek word *astrapto* (another form of *astrape*) is used in Acts 9:3 and in 22:6, in connection with the vision of what Paul saw when he was on the road to Damascus; of which Acts 26:13 is another account, using *lamprotes*.

It has also been asked why Jesus did not use the Greek word *phaino*, which is used in the New Testament in connection with the shining of the sun. To this we reply that in Matthew 24:27 the word *phaino* is used. We quote: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and *shineth* (*phaino*) even unto the west," etc. The facts are, as the careful student will find by the use of a Greek concordance, that the three words—*lamprotes*, *astrape*, and *phaino*; with their variations—are similar in meaning, and all have to do with brightshining, or a glare of light, without regard to how the light is produced.

The Greek word *anatello*, which is translated "rising of the sun," in Mark 16:2, describes the beginning of the sun's daily journey, but would not adequately depict the full result of Christ's presence, which ultimately is to fill the world with light—"from the east even unto the west."

The word "lightning" is insisted upon by some in an effort to prove the instantaneousness of the events associated with Christ's return; but in the text in question Jesus is explaining how people would know of His presence, not the length of time it would require for Him to come. Hence, whether we translate *astrape* as "lightning," or as the light of the sun, the Scriptural symbology would be much the same. For example, note the following text: "His lightnings *enlightened* the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills (kingdoms) melted like wax at the *presence* of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." (Psa. 97:4, 5.) The melting of the kingdoms, as mentioned in this text, will be discussed further on in this article.

Christ's presence is not to come upon the world with instantaneous brilliancy. This is clearly shown by the prophet, when he says, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark; but it shall be one day, which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass, that in the evening time it shall be light."—Zech. 14:6, 7.

Most accurately does Zechariah's prophetic description of the day of Christ's presence (see verse 5) thus coincide with Jesus' own words, when He says that His *parousia* will be like the "brightshining" that begins in the east and gradually spreads until it reaches even unto the west. Ordinarily when the sun reaches the west it soon becomes dark again; but not so with this "day of the Lord," because "in the evening (of that day) it shall be light"—the full light of the glory of God will then be filling the earth. The enlightening and healing rays of the "Sun of righteousness" will then have swept away all the mists of superstition and darkness, and restored the race to full life and happiness; and ever thereafter will be the glorious, eternal day of life and universal peace.

Christ is Present

Let us now briefly review the points thus far considered. We have seen that the second presence of Christ was to be an invisible presence—just as Satan has been invisibly present during the past six thousand years. We have seen that during the early part of Christ's presence the world would go on with its usual affairs, not knowing anything about His *parousia*, even as the worldly in Noah's day did not perceive the import of what was then taking place, nor know about the impending danger until the flood was actually upon them. We have seen, furthermore, that while the world in Noah's day was in ignorance of the impending flood, yet Noah and his family fully appreciated the significance of the times. Not only did they know of the coming flood, and were preparing for it, but in due time the Lord let them know the *exact day* when the flood actually would begin.—See Genesis 7:4.

We have seen also that the Lord's true servants, the watchers, down here in the end of this age, likewise would know that they were in "the days of the Son of man"—the days of *His presence*—even as

Paul said, "ye brethren shall not be in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief" in the night. We have seen, according to Jesus' own words, that one who is "*born of the spirit*"—as Jesus was at the time of His resurrection—is invisible to human eyes, and manifests himself not to physical eyes, but may be detected by the things which he does—even as we can detect the presence of the wind, not by seeing it but by noting its effects around us.

In view of the fact that the "watchers" may rightfully expect to know of the presence of Christ by noting the things which are taking place among themselves and in the world at large—the events themselves revealing His presence—we therefore make the statement unhesitatingly, that *Christ is already present* in the earth, for He is now doing the things which He said He would do at His return. From here on in this discussion, therefore, it will be our pleasurable task to point out many of the existing *evidences* of Christ's second *presence*.

III

Various symbolic passages of Scripture, some of which already have been cited, probably will come into the reader's mind as objections to the claim which we are here making, that *Christ has come!* Some, perhaps, will recall the text which declares that "every eye shall see Him." Others will remember Paul's declaration that Jesus will "descend from heaven with a shout"; and they will wonder how Christ can be present, since "every eye" has not yet seen Him and His "shout" has not been heard. These and other similar texts will be examined presently. The Bible foretells an orderly series of events that would occur during the second presence of Christ, and the afore-said symbolic utterances have a very definite place in connection with this subject, as we shall see in the course of this study.

First Sign of His presence

In Luke 12:37 we read, "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 sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Here is a definite statement, by Jesus Himself, declaring what He would do first when He returns. There is no mention of a "shout" here, nor anything about the blowing of a trumpet, and nothing about His coming in "clouds"; merely the simple statement that He would *serve food* to the Lord's faithful watchers. True, prior thereto various long-hidden Biblical facts had begun to clarify, as certain faithful Christians here and there began to see some timely truths, chronological and otherwise. But it was not until after 1874 that these and other truths became assembled into an orderly, comprehensive whole, so as to reveal the entire harmonious picture now recognized as the divine plan of the ages.

Food is used in the Bible as a symbol of divine truth upon which the Christian feeds. The aforementioned promise of our Lord therefore is to the

effect that when He returns there would be an outstanding revelation of truth to His faithful watchers. Has there been anything of this nature in our day? We hold that there has been. About 60 years ago there came just such an increased light of truth to the Lord's faithful watchers.

Space will not here permit of a discussion of Bible chronology, which fully corroborates the fact that our Lord's presence is now due; but we here mention the fact that a correct understanding of one of the periods of prophetic time—the 1335 symbolic days mentioned in the 12th chapter of Daniel—shows that they terminated in the year 1874 A. D. The prophet declares that the termination of those days would be a very “blessed” time for the “wise” among God's people, and that the “wise” should “understand.”

We hold that the “blessedness” referred to in this prophecy has been produced by a clearer unfoldment of the divine plan since 1874. Thousands have testified to the joy that has come to them because of the revelation of truth since that date.

What is Truth?

From the early days of the Reformation, or Protestant Movement, in the sixteenth century, there began a slight increase of light on God's Word and along many other lines; but it did not become very marked until the nineteenth century, when many Bible Societies were formed, and numerous inventions made possible a general increase in knowledge. This increase of light was not confined to any one particular group of Christians in those days, but seemed to progress naturally from one to the other. It is probably true, however, that in the early part of the nineteenth century the group of Christians known as Millerites, or Second Adventists, were favored with more light on God's Word than any of the other groups of that time. And this undoubtedly was due chiefly to the fact that they manifested special interest in the timely subject of our Lord's return.

Nevertheless, such light of truth as was enjoyed by those early Adventists, when compared with the more abundant light that has come to consecrated Bible students since 1874 A. D., seems very meagre indeed. The best that the Adventists could conceive concerning the purpose of Christ's second coming was that He is returning to snatch up His elect unto Himself, and then would proceed to destroy or “purify” this literal earth by burning up all its inhabitants and institutions with literal fire. The glorious millennial reign, they thought, would consist of Christ and His bride looking over the balcony of heaven and watching the earth sizzle for a thousand years.

When the Apostle Peter made that remarkable statement in which he identified and acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah who had been promised to Israel throughout the Old Testament, our Lord said unto Him, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 16:17.) The clear implication of this text is that the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah of promise is something that

can come only by divine revelation. Neither the Adventists nor any other group of professed Christians prior to 1874 really knew Jesus as the *Messiah*, because they grossly misunderstood the plan and the purpose of His Messiahship.

Heaven Begins to Work

Shortly after the apostles fell asleep this great Messianic truth was completely lost sight of by professed followers of Jesus. Neither the mystics nor the scholastics of the middle ages had the slightest conception of just *why* Jesus had come into the world—much less could they comprehend the purpose of His second coming. Having no understanding whatever of the real Messianic purpose of God, which is to bless all nations with life and happiness upon the earth (Gen. 3:8), they of course could not recognize in Jesus the One whom God had appointed to accomplish such a purpose. Having no clear idea as to the real nature of man, nor of what his fall involved, they could not appreciate the Messianic promises concerning the future restoration of the fallen race, nor the words of Peter when he mentioned the coming “times of *restitution* of all things spoken by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts 3:19-21.

While ignoring or repudiating the great truth concerning the “times of restitution,” which Peter declares to be the ultimate purpose and accomplishment of Christ's second presence, “Christendom,” in the very nature of things, could not have the slightest conception of why Jesus should return to earth; even as they did not know why He came the first time. And what was true of the middle-age Papal philosophers and teachers on this point, has been true also of the teachers in the various Protestant movements—and to about the same extent. Some thought that Jesus, in some unexplainable way, is trying to save as many as possible from eternal torture by taking them to heaven. Others, such as the Adventists, while not believing the eternal torment theory, nevertheless did not see much in the gospel of Christ except an admonition to escape from divine wrath, that they may live somewhere in an eternal “holy city,” with a Christ that is both spirit and flesh and bone.

The Truth Restored

It was not until Jesus, at the beginning of His second presence, girded Himself and came forth to serve the pure gospel of God's plan as “meat in due season” to His faithful watching “household,” that the foundation truth of God's great Messianic purpose, and Jesus as the true Messiah in that purpose, became restored to the church after having been lost sight of for centuries. Based upon, and in harmony with, this great fundamental truth of the Messiah, there also now has been served to God's people, the faithful watchers, a clear, rational, comprehensive and soul satisfying explanation of every essential phase of the divine plan. These precious doctrines were put together for us into one grand, harmonious whole, which enabled the watchers to know for a certainty exactly why God created man, and what is His ultimate purpose concerning him.

As a result of the serving of these precious truths, there also came a clear understanding of the ages and dispensations in God's plan, making it possible for us to "rightly divide the Word of truth." Furthermore, for the first time since the death of the apostles, there now came to God's people a clear understanding of the "hidden mystery" concerning God's purpose for the church. Our *present* Bridegroom proceeded to remove the veil of superstition and permit the watchers to understand why God has allowed so much sorrow and misery to continue in the world all down through the centuries—the 'permission of evil' became a subject clearly understood for the first time.

An accurate understanding of the death of Jesus and how it could open up the way of salvation for the whole world of mankind, also has been given to God's people in these "last days," and it is now clear how the world is actually to benefit by the death of Jesus during the thousand years of Christ's reign. Prior to the second presence of our Lord there was no clear understanding of the distinction between human and spirit natures; but now this subject has become transparent, and the faithful watchers are rejoicing in the clear unfoldment of truth on this fundamental subject.

Ransom Doctrine Explains Trinity Error

During the dark ages much confusion arose in regard to the nature of God Himself. The absurd pagan theory was developed in the second or third century that there are *three* gods in one, and this misinterpretation of what the Bible says about the *holy spirit* supplied the third person in the trinity—and they spoke of "God the Father," "God the Son," and "God the Holy Ghost." Not until the presence of our Lord began did the ransom doctrine prove the truth on this very fundamental subject. To the "watchers" the Lord has made plain the truth concerning the Heavenly Father and His beloved Son, and also just what the holy spirit consists of; so that now the enlightened Christian is able for the first time in centuries, to rejoice in a rational understanding of this whole matter as a result of his present full appreciation of the philosophy of the "Ransom for all."

The foregoing are but a few of the many blessed portions of truth that the Lord, true to His promise, has served to His household as "meat in due season" since His return. While individuals throughout the age vaguely understood one or another of these doctrines, they were not clearly understood in their entirety, as parts of God's great plan of salvation, since apostolic times, until shortly after the year 1874. These precious truths constitute the "meat in due season," which the returned Lord has been serving to His faithful watchers for the past half century. It is the understanding of these doctrines that constitutes the "blessedness" referred to in the 12th chapter of Daniel's prophecy; and every Bible Student who has a knowledge of these things can testify of the blessedness thus received.

Nor is it reasonable to now ascribe today's great increase in knowledge concerning God's plan, to the

inventive genius or imagination of some man's mind. Obviously then, the only logical conclusion to be reached on this matter is to admit that the Lord has fulfilled His promise, that He has returned and girded Himself, and has proceeded to serve His people just as He said He would. "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; Matt. 24:44-46.

IV

In Paul's *first* letter to the Thessalonians (5:1-6) he mentioned that "the day of the Lord" would come upon the whole world "as a thief in the night," but that the Lord's true people, if faithfully watching, would be fully cognizant of what is taking place. After receiving this letter it appears that some in the Thessalonian church had hastily assumed the idea that "the day of the Lord" had already arrived, and that Christ was then invisibly present. This seems evident from the fact that in Paul's *second* epistle to this same church he endeavors to correct this false impression which the brethren had received.

It is in the first epistle to the Thessalonians that the apostle says that the Lord will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." (1 Thes. 4:16.) Had Paul intended that these statements should be understood literally, it would have been a simple matter for him, in his second epistle, to merely remind the Thessalonians that no literal shout had yet occurred, no literal trumpet had yet been sounded, and that no one had yet heard the literal voice of the archangel. But Paul did not use any such argument in His endeavor to correct the wrong impression of the Thessalonians that the Lord had returned. Why not?

Obviously Paul knew that the "voice," the "trumpet" and the "shout" were merely symbolic terms, and were not to be fulfilled in a literal manner. There was a much more simple way of convincing those early brethren that Jesus had not yet returned, than to attempt an explanation of these symbolisms and show that they had not been fulfilled. Furthermore it was not yet "due time" for those symbolisms to be understood. Paul, in vision, had seen many things which it was not lawful to reveal prior to the time of their fulfilment.

The Anti-Christ Destroyed

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 we read: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

We will not take the space here to examine the evidence necessary to prove the identity of this "man of sin"; but it is an incontrovertible fact, generally

recognized by Bible scholars, that this great antichrist system which Paul said would be developed as a result of a "falling away" from the truth, is *Papal Rome*, including its many off-shoots as represented in the various church-state systems of Protestantism. Paul declares that the day in which he wrote could not be "the day of the Lord," because this antichrist had not yet been developed. But Paul does not drop the matter here. He goes on to say that when the day of the Lord does arrive it would mean the destruction of the antichrist.

In telling us of the approaching presence of the antichrist system in the world, note that Paul uses the Greek word *parousia*. Concerning the "man of sin" he says, "Whose presence (*parousia*) is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders." Here the word *parousia* undoubtedly is intended to cover the entire period of the existence of antichrist; again showing us that this word is descriptive of a *period* of actual presence, and does not refer to a sudden event or arrival. The *parousia* of the antichrist has been a long period, during which it has worked "lying wonders." The *parousia* of Christ is a period during which He exposes the lies of the antichrist and dispenses the blessings of truth.

"Then Shall That Wicked One be Revealed"

Paul points out that the recognition of this antichrist system in all its horrible ugliness would be one of the things that would take place in the day of the Lord. We quote: "And *then* shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His *parousia*." (Verse 8.) It is true that some earnest reformers prior to 1874 did declare the fact that the Catholic Church undoubtedly is portrayed in this and other prophetic pictures of the Scriptures. But the full revealment or identification of the entire antichrist did not occur until the time of the Lord's *parousia*; and for the very obvious reason that none prior to that time really understood the true significance of the Messianic purpose, hence could not clearly understand what constitutes the antichrist, or anti-Messiah.

Millions have recognized in Jesus a very wise, self-sacrificing and devoted prophet of the Lord, and have followed Him as such. Many even have by their lips accepted the atoning blood of Jesus' sacrifice, but with no clear understanding of how His blood atones. Now as it remained until the time of the Lord's *presence* for an understanding of the Messianic purpose to be restored to His watchers, so likewise it remained until the same time for the antichrist to be fully identified as that great system that sought to supplant the Messiah, and caricature the grand purpose of God through the Messiah.

Millions have recognized Jesus as one who in some way must have been sent of God, and therefore have taken His name. So likewise many have seen the antichrist system to be an abomination in the earth, and have sought to free themselves of it. But the true revealment of the Christ, and also of the anti-

christ, are events both of which have taken place during these "days of the Son of man," and both are convincing evidences of His presence.

Consumed by the Word

But much more than the mere revealment of the antichrist system was to take place during the Lord's *parousia*. Paul says, "whom the Lord will *consume* with the spirit of His *mouth*, and shall destroy with the brightness of His *parousia*." (2 Thes. 2:8.) Is the great antichrist system now being consumed? Undoubtedly it is! The word "consume" implies a gradual process. This was to be accomplished with "the spirit of His mouth," that is, by enlightenment concerning His teachings. Certainly the antichrist does not have the power today that it exercised during the dark ages, when the Word was kept hidden from the people. The truth is the enemy of the antichrist and will ultimately consume it completely. Let us remember, also, that the antichrist is not merely a false church system; it is more than that. It is the union of the false church with the Pope, as vicegerent of Christ, as a ruling power over the kingdoms of earth, seeking thereby to reign before the time, as Christ's Kingdom—"Christendom." In the destruction of the antichrist, therefore, the church-state phase of this great system of iniquity must be the first to go. And what do we find?

It requires no great amount of argument to show that in the last half century the theory of the "divine right of kings," originally sponsored by the Catholic Church, and made into a seeming reality through the union of church and state, has been gradually, yet with increasing rapidity, going to pieces. The political sovereignty of the Catholic Church itself has been called in question in country after country during the last few years, and in many of these places she has completely lost her power to control the governments. This is because the "increase of knowledge" due to the Lord's presence has caused her to lose much of her superstitious power over the masses.

The Greek Catholic Church in Russia has been destroyed. Roman Catholic political authority in Spain has been destroyed. The Roman Catholic Church has lost all its political influence in Mexico. Right in Italy itself, the very seat of the antichrist system, the apostate church has nothing whatever to say in the affairs of state. As if to make sure of this, Mussolini agreed to the creation of the Vatican City as a state, separate and distinct from the fascist state-kingdom of Italy—a sort of dream-world for the Pope. Any man today who would be bold enough or foolish enough to publicly proclaim that any king or prince or dictator in the whole wide world is now reigning by "divine right," would be held up to merited ridicule by the thinking public of all lands—so extensively has the "consuming" of the antichrist's hold upon the people progressed to date.

True, the Catholic Church still exists as a religious institution, and millions still go to mass each Sunday. But would not anyone be failing to acknowledge facts, if he cannot see that the old church-state system, and

the various integral parts that go to make up that system, are rapidly going into decay, being consumed, destroyed, "by the brightness of His *parousia*?" Thus we see that Paul, while primarily correcting a wrong impression on the part of the Thessalonian brethren concerning the time of our Lord's return, at the same time also furnished us with a very outstanding "sign" which we today behold as marking the second presence of Christ.

Destroyed by His Brightness

Paul said that the Lord would destroy the antichrist with the "brightness (*epiphaneia*) of His *parousia*." This Greek word *epiphaneia* is properly translated brightness, or brightshining. Some have erroneously supposed that this word refers to a second phase or later period of our Lord's presence—as if His *parousia* would continue up to a certain time and then His *epiphaneia* would begin. But we believe it to be self-evident that the word *parousia* applies to the entire thousand-year period of Christ's presence, while the word *epiphaneia* is descriptive of certain things to be accomplished during the *parousia*. On this point we quote with approval from the booklet published many years ago, entitled, "Our Lord's Return," as follows:

"Our Lord's *epiphaneia* (brightshining) and His *apokalupsis* (unveiling) began shortly after His *parousia* began; the bright shining of His presence is now visible to those who are walking 'in the light'—to those who 'are not in darkness with the world.' It is a mental illumination to the eyes of our understanding, and not to our natural eyes. The *epiphaneia* of the Lord is already affecting the world also; though not through the eyes of the understanding, for they have no eyes for such spiritual things; nevertheless, the brightshining of our Lord's presence is influencing and affecting the whole course of the world, through an increase of knowledge on every subject."

It is, as we have seen, this *epiphaneia*, or brightshining of His presence that is gradually destroying the antichrist.

Scoffers "in the Last Days"

The Apostle Peter explains that "in the last days"—in the time of the Lord's second presence—"there shall come scoffers walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise (assurance) of His presence (*parousia*)? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter 3:3, 4.) The Greek word translated "promise" in this text is one which means "divine assurance of good." So the question raised by these scoffers is, "Where is the assurance that Christ is present? Isn't everything just the same as it always has been? In fact, do we not have even more sin and trouble in the world than ever before?" Others say, "Doesn't natural evolutionary law control the destiny of all things, as it has done from the very beginning of life on this planet? What assurance, then do you have that Christ's presence would make any difference with the natural course of things?"

Ah yes, Jesus said that to the world there would be

no evidence of His presence when it begins. Just as in the days of Noah, the world would not know. Perhaps Peter had these very words of our Lord in mind when describing the attitude of the scoffers in the last days. They would be "willingly ignorant," Peter says. Now in the days of Noah there was a great change impending, although things went on in the world as usual until the flood came. Then Peter explains that according to the Word of prophecy a similar condition of unbelief would exist in the last days, although there would be less excuse for it than in Noah's day—those who did not know being "willingly ignorant."

Peter then goes on to predict the disintegrating processes which we today can see are dissolving the old order of things, which he symbolically describes as "the heavens and the earth which are now." He likens the consuming forces to fire and to a great noise. Now all of this, says Peter, is to occur because the day of the Lord has arrived, and constitutes the assurance of His presence. He comes as a "thief in the night," and on account of His presence "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." In other words, He does not return *after* the destruction of the symbolic heavens and earth, but *before*. The "elements," the "heavens," the "great noise" and the "fervent heat" are symbolic terms, descriptive of various parts of Satan's empire and of the method by which it shall be destroyed.

The point to be noted here is that the melting of the symbolic elements of this old order is to take place as a result of the arrival of "the day of the Lord"—the period during which He would be *present*. Hence, if now we can find evidence that these disintegrating processes are already going on, it will form another link in the chain of circumstances which serves as a further "sign" that Christ actually has returned and even now is gradually destroying the existing evil order of things, preparatory to the full establishment of His long-promised Kingdom of righteousness and universal peace.

Present World Distress Another Sign

Among the "signs" which Jesus gave to His disciples, in answer to their questions as to how they would know of His second presence and of the end of the age, was the fact that at that time there would come a period of great "distress of nations, with perplexity." He said that "men's hearts shall fail them for fear" as they looked forward to the terrible things they see coming upon the earth. Jesus said also that "the sea and the waves" would be "roaring." By these expressions He accurately described a condition that we see in evidence in the world today. The people are totally ignorant, as yet, of the fact that Christ is present and preparing to establish His Kingdom; but they do recognize the fact that world-conditions have gotten beyond the control of even the wisest of their statesmen and leaders. Because of this the hearts of men are filled with anxiety as they look into the immediate future.

The "roaring" of the "sea" is an apt illustration of

the restless, discontented condition of the masses as they surge backward and forward against the very foundations of the great governmental bulwarks of the present social order. The Lord's faithful watchers, who know of the Lord's presence, know what all this means; hence, as the prophet declares, "we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." Continuing, the prophet says, "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted."—Psalm 46: 3, 4, 7.

It seems a fact, extremely difficult to refute, that the kingdoms of this world have been "melting" during the past few years. Since the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the old-world empires have fallen like leaves from an autumn tree. The destructive forces which now are beating against our so-called civilization are irresistible, and they are gradually bringing about the complete destruction of every kingdom on earth. This is the very process of destruction that Peter describes, and which he declares to be God-given evidence of "the day of the Lord." In view of these undeniable facts, how can any of the Lord's "watchers" deny that the invisible presence of Christ is now a reality?—See Psalm 97: 4, 5.

"The Voice of the Archangel"

But note the direct cause of the 'melting' of the symbolic earth—"He uttered His voice, the earth melted." Now let us turn to that greatly misunderstood passage in 1 Thessalonians 4: 16: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God." There is only one archangel mentioned in the Bible, and his name is Michael. In Daniel 12: 1 a very interesting prophecy is given concerning Him, which reads: "And at that time shall Michael stand up . . . and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." Jesus quoted this very prophecy, and gave it as one of the "signs" which would mark the time of His presence.

By comparing these various prophecies, then, we find that one of the things that Jesus was to do during His presence was the exercising of His invisible power over the nations—the commanding "voice of the archangel"—and that this would result in the "melting" of the symbolic earth; that is, the weakening and ultimately the destruction of the existing order. This destruction of the symbolic earth is described by Daniel as the great "time of trouble." This time of trouble began with the World War in 1914; it was to consist of *spasms* of "travail"; and this is what is causing the present distress of nations which is striking fear into the hearts of all peoples of earth.

The Revelator sums up this line of prophecy for us in these words: "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou has taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that

they should be judged, and that Thou shouldst give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth."

The foregoing passage really describes the work of the entire thousand years of Christ's *parousia*, including the final destruction of the wilfully wicked. The beginning of that work is already in evidence. The anger of the nations, as a result of the "voice of the archangel," already is a vivid reality. The fact that the floundering nations have not yet recognized or identified the mighty unseen Power that is bringing about their destruction in preparation for a new and better order, is no argument against the fact that such power is present and is accomplishing the divine purpose exactly as foretold in prophecy. The Bible says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart with the Egyptian plagues, but there is no evidence that Pharaoh had any realization that God actually was doing the things that thus affected him. God, in His supreme majesty and greatness, generally works thus in silent inscrutable ways. The invisible presence of His Christ, our blessed Messiah, is even now steadily battering down the existing Satan-dominated rule of selfishness, in preparation for the full establishment of His own glorious Kingdom of righteousness and everlasting peace.

Descending "With a Shout"

The Apostle Paul further declares that Jesus at His second coming would "descend from heaven with a shout." (1 Thes. 4: 16.) The Greek word translated "shout" in this text literally means "to incite." Now let us examine briefly what actually has happened in the world since 1874—the time we believe that the second presence of Christ was due to begin. What has been the one out-standing influence that has brought the hitherto complacent world into its present state of general collapse? Has it not been the incitement of all classes, within the last fifty years, to demand their "rights," real or fancied, along all lines?

And what has incited the erstwhile slumbering masses thus suddenly to arise and clamor for liberty for themselves and for their fellowmen? Has it not been due to the great 'increase of knowledge,' which has come about by divine providence in fulfillment of prophecy? (Dan. 12: 4.) This great increase of knowledge along all lines, which is enabling the people to throw off their age-long superstitions, has come about as a direct result of the Lord's *parousia*. True, the foundation for this general dissemination of knowledge already had been laid, through the invention of the printing press and other latter-day devices; but not until within the last half century has the general diffusion of knowledge along all lines gained sufficient momentum to enable the masses to begin casting off their shackles of superstition and class rule, and to create within them the desire for economic liberty, security and happiness which they now insist should be the heritage of every human being.

Hence it is seen that a mighty "shout" has attended our Lord's return, even as Paul predicted. The people have heard it and have taken it up; and thus they

have been "incited" to clamor for the things which they now believe are rightfully theirs. And by this "shout" the Lord is accomplishing a double purpose. (1) He thereby is creating a condition of mind in the masses of the oppressed and suffering millions of the world that ultimately will result in the complete overturning of the present social order. (2) This "shout" is accomplishing a gradual preparation of the hearts and minds of the people for the coming Kingdom's blessings which will be dispensed to a dying world just beyond the final spasm of this great time of trouble.

Will not the Messiah declare liberty for all people when His reign begins? Will He not give mankind economic security and unending peace? Will He not bring down the high and haughty ones who have lorded it over the less fortunate ones of earth, and have selfishly exploited the resources of men's physical strength and mental genius? Surely He will! And it is the desire and hope of attaining these very blessings that has been put into the hearts of the people by the "shout" of encouragement that has been going up for the last half century, or more.

Thus it is that the great "shout" has gone up throughout the length and breadth of the earth; and the second presence of Christ is directly responsible for it. This shout is still going up, and will continue until it terminates in a world-wide chorus of boundless joy, when the masses recognize the hand of Him who is directing the destiny of the people for their lasting blessing. Then they will say, "Lo, this is our God; . . . we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."—Isaiah 25:9.

Peace, Be Still!

The Psalmist David prophesies of the "melting" of the "earth" as a result of the "voice" of the Lord during His presence, and foretells the great "desolation" He will make in the earth at that time. Then he describes the ultimate destruction of the war machines of earth. He declares that finally to the warring nations and to all the clashing "elements" of earth, the new King's voice of authority will say: "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth."

Peter also declares that as a result of the presence of Christ the various "elements" of the existing symbolic "heavens and earth" will pass away with "a great noise." Certainly the clamoring elements of society right now are creating a great deal of "noise," as each insists on having its own particular remedy tried out on the sick and dying world order. But just "noise" is all there is to the proposed panaceas of the worldly-wise. Soon the "voice" of the invisible One who is at the helm will say, "be still"—you now have made enough noise, the time now has come for My righteous will to be exalted in the earth; and in the following of My plans all will find peace and plenty!—Psalm 46.

Following this happy eventuation of the great "time of trouble" will come a responsive shout of joy on the part of the people. We quote from the 57th Psalm: "O clap your hands. all ye people; shout unto

God with the voice of triumph." In verse 5 the Lord is pictured as joining in this shout. He says, "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." In verse 9 the earthly phase of the Kingdom—the "new earth"—is referred to. The prophet there says, "The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham; for the shields of the earth (the protecting powers over human affairs) belong unto God: He is greatly exalted."

The reader will recall that earlier in this discussion it was pointed out that the invisible Christ will exercise His Kingdom power for the blessing of the people, chiefly through a group of earthly representatives, whom the Bible clearly shows to be the resurrected prophets and other faithful ones of the period prior to Jesus' first advent. These are the ones referred to by the Psalmist as the "princes of the people."

V

There are four passages in the New Testament which state that Christ will come amid "clouds," and that He will be seen by the people of the earth. One of these texts declares that "every eye shall see Him." (Rev. 1:7.) The other three texts are found in the Gospels of Matthew (24:30), Mark (13:26), and Luke (21:27). Much emphasis has been laid on these texts in an effort to prove that Jesus will appear visibly in the sky, among literal clouds; and that He will be literally gazed upon by every pair of human eyes existing upon the earth at the time of His second advent. But let us examine these passages and see what they mean.

First of all let us see if these texts are talking about the literal sky, when they use the word "heaven." In Matthew 24:31—which is the very next verse after the one which says that "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of *heaven*"—we read these words: "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet: and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of *heaven* to the other." Now the "heaven" of this text undoubtedly is the same heaven mentioned in the preceding verse. The "sign of the Son of man" appears in this heaven; also Jesus is seen coming in this heaven; and from this same heaven God's elect are gathered. What heaven is meant?

In Mark's account of this second-advent prophecy we are told that the "elect" shall be gathered "from the uttermost part of earth to the uttermost part of heaven." (Mark 13:27.) And then, in verse 31, Jesus is reported as saying that "Heaven and earth shall pass away." Bible Students know that the literal earth and the literal heavens will not pass away, but are to abide forever (Eccl. 1:4); and that the perfected earth is to be the everlasting home of the restored human family. Manifestly then the word "heaven," in our Lord's prophecy, is used in a symbolic sense. It necessarily follows, therefore, that if the "heaven" in which Christ is to be seen is a symbolic heaven, then the "clouds" in that symbolic heaven also must be symbolic. And if the heaven and the clouds are symbolic, then those who "see" Christ

in the symbolic heaven, among the symbolic clouds, must do so in some other way than by literally beholding Him with their physical eyes.

"Every Eye Shall See Him"

The Greek word translated "see," in the four texts under consideration, is *optanomai*. This same Greek word is translated "see" in Matthew 26:64, which reads as follows: "Hereafter shall ye *see* the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The "right hand of power" undoubtedly has reference to the high exaltation of Jesus to the "right hand of the Majesty on high." Surely no human being ever will be able to literally gaze up into the heavenly courts to behold Jesus seated at the right hand of Jehovah Himself!

These words of Jesus were spoken to the Jewish high priest and others who attended the Master's mock trial just before His crucifixion. The high priest was seeking to trap Jesus into saying something that could be construed as blasphemy or perhaps treason. Jesus knew that the day was coming when He would be the great spiritual Ruler of the whole world; hence He told the priest by these words that in the future He would be recognized as the divinely chosen One—the Messiah. The remainder of this text also agrees with the other four cited passages, in that it connects the recognition of the Son of man with the fact that He will come in symbolic clouds.

Note the fact also, as clearly shown in Matthew 24:30, that the recognition of Jesus by all the "tribes of the earth," is closely associated with the "sign of the Son of man" which is to appear in heaven. Indeed, the language indicates that it is the appearance of the "sign" that enables the people to "see" the Son of man. And what is that sign? We already have noted a number of signs given by Jesus and the apostles, whereby the faithful watchers would be able to recognize the second presence of Christ. But this particular sign, recognized from the beginning by the watchers, is the same sign that would cause "all the tribes of the earth to mourn." It will require a drastic demonstration of divine power to awaken the selfish world of mankind to the fact that the old order must give place to the Kingdom of God.

A Modern Sign in the Heavens

This sign which produces the *mourning* appears in "heaven." We now remind the reader of Peter's prophecy, already examined briefly, in which he declares that the "heavens shall pass away with a great noise." Peter also assures us that there are to be "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3.) It is the governmental arrangements for men, religious and civil, that the Bible refers to as the symbolic heavens and the symbolic earth. Just as the literal heavens bear a certain relationship to the literal earth, so the Lord has used these literal spheres to illustrate the fact that human affairs are under the influence of higher, or spiritual powers. The reader will recall that earlier in this discussion we found that the fallen Lucifer, and the unholy angels associated with him, primarily constitute the present spiritual powers of earth.

The "new heavens" will consist of the exalted Jesus and His glorified church—the new spiritual Kingdom of earth. Paul tells Christians that they already have been translated by faith "into the Kingdom of His dear Son." (Col. 1:13.) This doesn't mean that the Kingdom was established in Paul's day; but it does mean that true Christians, while still in the flesh, are counted as being a part of that Kingdom; for the Kingdom is now in its embryonic or preparatory stage. It is for this reason that Paul speaks of the church as being already set down with Jesus in the "heavenlies."—Eph. 1:3, Diaglott.

Now even as true Christians, while still in the flesh, are thus looked upon by God as a part of the "new heavens," so also the nominal religious systems of the earth are pictured as a part of the present "heavens." It is a fact easily recognized by Christian watchers, that the spiritual "prince of this world" has exercised his nefarious influence chiefly through the medium of false religious systems and their adherents. So potent have been the religious systems in the earth that practically every successful political ruler has found it necessary to employ some brand of religion as a part of his governmental machinery; but always it has been a false religion that has entered into union with the state.

Present Heavens Now Being Shaken

In Matthew 24:29 Jesus gives us another sign of His presence, saying that at that time "the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." The Greek word translated "powers," in this text, is one which means "miraculous power." It is the same word that is used in Ephesians 6:12, where the apostle says that the Christian must fight against "principalities and against powers." It has reference, undoubtedly, to the invisible power of Satan operating through false religious systems. And is it not a fact that within the last few years all religious influence in governmental circles has been terribly shaken—not only in Russia, Spain, Mexico, Italy, but in fact everywhere? We have already noted to what extent the church-state combine is being discounted in these particular countries. But while this is true, and while no intelligent man or woman wants to see the world controlled by religious superstition, bigotry and intolerance—as it has been for centuries past—yet all are fearful of the outcome upon society in general should all respect for religion die in the human heart.

It is generally agreed that it is better to have people held in restraint by religious superstition, than to have them run rampant into orgies of selfishness, in which the utter lack of the fear of a higher power would allow greed and lust to be the chief guide to conduct. However, it is into just such a cesspool of debauchery that the world is being rushed headlong at the present time. The continued increase of education, foretold as one of the evidences of the "time of the end," while accomplishing the praiseworthy result of breaking down credulous belief in the grotesque god of the dark ages, nevertheless is leaving the people—not merely the rising generation but millions of older ones as well—without faith in a Supreme

Being of any kind. It is these godless millions, being no longer restrained by belief that God is ruling the world through the present governments, and being faced by the cruelties which they now see imposed upon the masses by the greedy money gods, who are making insurgent demands for their rights and are threatening to wreck the entire existing social order. And indeed they will do this before the final end.

Why the Nations Mourn

The watchers can even now see this "sign" in the "heavens." Already the tribes of the earth are beginning to mourn because of it. Already the example of a Soviet no-god government in Russia is striking terror into the hearts of other peoples. While the dictators or rulers of other nations probably have little or no use for religion themselves, yet they hesitate as yet to ignore entirely the church systems which in the past have held such a powerful grip upon the masses. It may be that through sheer fear some of these dictators may endeavor again to exalt religion as a part of their governmental scheme of things, but it will be too late for that. The people now have learned too much to stand for such a rule of bigotry as flourished under the "holy" Roman Empire during the dark ages. Hence the final outcome will be the complete wreck of all constituted authority.

The religious phase—the "heavens"—of the great antichrist system, now being destroyed, is pictured in the book of Revelation as a wicked "woman," a "harlot," because she has committed 'fornication with the kings of the earth.' This woman is pictured as sitting upon or controlling "many waters," which are declared to be "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." It is these turbulent waters that are described by Jesus as "the sea and the waves roaring." (Luke 21:25.) Now this woman, explains the Revelator, "is that great city (religious power), that reigneth over the kings of the earth."—Rev. 17:18.

One would suppose that the nations and peoples of the earth would rejoice to be free from the dictatorship of this unholy woman, but not so. While they "hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire," yet when they realize that in her waning influence they have lost the most powerful element in their governmental scheme for controlling the masses, these very "kings of the earth who have committed fornication (meaning church-state union), and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke (evidence) of her burning (destruction)."

"Alas, Alas, That Great City!"

Continuing, the Revelator says that these kings will be seen "standing afar off for the fear of her torment (fearing the result of acknowledging sympathy with false religious institutions, nevertheless lamenting that they have lost such an efficient ally in controlling the people), saying Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city; for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her . . . The merchants . . . which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for

the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing. . . And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, . . . for in one hour is she made desolate."—Rev. 18:10-19

It being evident, therefore, that the "heavens," the "woman," and "that great city, Babylon," are symbolic of Satan's counterfeit religious powers through which he has ruled the world, it is not difficult to see how "the powers of the heavens" are even now being shaken, as Jesus said they would be at the time of His second presence. It seems obvious, also, from the Scriptures quoted foregoing, that the "mourning" on the part of the various peoples of the earth is directly due to this shaking. The "shaking," of course, is now only in its initial stage, hence the mourning as yet is but faintly heard from time to time; nevertheless a distinct fear is already being voiced that the loss of religious influence in the world is spelling certain doom for the existing social order.

The breaking down of religious authority is only one phase of the great "time of trouble," but it is a very important phase because it prepares the way for the complete collapse of the whole social structure, which must take place prior to the full establishment of God's universal Kingdom. This "sign" in the heavens, while already producing an occasional "wail" here and there on the part of far-seeing statesmen and religious leaders in the world, has not yet developed to the point where it reveals to the world the actual invisible presence of earth's new King. But even on this point there is an occasional half-way awakening to the fact that the peculiar combination of troubles in the world today may indicate that the Lord is having *something* to do with earth's affairs. Just how the full revealment of Messiah's presence will come about is yet a matter of conjecture, and until the Lord makes that point clear it is well not to speculate.

Gathering Clouds of the Approaching Storm

The "clouds" in the "heavens" undoubtedly are symbolic of the gathering elements of trouble which ultimately will precipitate the destructive storm that will finally wreck those "heavens." The language of the passages under consideration seems to indicate that in some way these symbolic clouds themselves will have much to do with revealing the presence of the Son of man. Now literal clouds conceal, rather than reveal; which further proves that the "clouds" in which Christ was to come are **symbolic and not literal**.

We have gone somewhat into detail in the examination of the various prophetic terms concerning the Lord's presence in order to help the reader to realize that a literal interpretation of the texts in which they occur would be absurd. But the foregoing suggestions concerning the manner of fulfilment of these prophetic symbolisms, which we believe are now under way, are not presented in any dogmatic sense, although they seem to us to be in fullest harmony with the facts as they thus far have manifested themselves.

But some may still insist that the word "see" in these passages could have no other meaning than to actually and literally behold with the physical eye. For the benefit of such, we quote the following passages in which the same Greek word is translated "see."

Revelation 19:10—"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, *See* thou do it not."

Romans 15:21—"But as it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall *see*; and they that have not heard shall understand."

John 3:36—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life."

"The Trump of God"

The blowing of a trumpet—"the last trump"—is prominently associated with the second coming and presence of Christ. Middle-age philosophers, and others, would have us believe that this refers to a literal trumpet; but, as with all the other symbols mentioned in the Bible, to attempt a literal interpretation of it is to do violence to reason, and humiliate the Christ by making Him a party to the use of primitive and ineffective methods of accomplishing His purposes. Traditional theology teaches that "Gabriel" is to blow this trumpet, although the Bible says nothing to indicate that Gabriel ever had a trumpet, or would ever blow one.

In 1st Thessalonians 4:16, already examined in part, Paul declares that "the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God." We have already noted that this shout of incitement and encouragement, resulting from the general increase of knowledge, has been and continues to be in active progress throughout the earth today. We have seen also that the commanding voice of "Michael, the archangel"—the invisible Christ—is also having its effect in directing the forces which are destroying the selfish governments and other institutions of earth. Let us now see if there is any evidence that this "trump of God" has been heard or is sounding at the present time. If we do find such evidence it will be one more proof that the Lord is now actually present.

In Old Testament times a trumpet was used to announce the arrival of a king or the proclamation of an important message. The function of the trumpet was to attract the attention of the people and to gather them together in order that the person or message might be properly presented to them. Sometimes the message would be in the nature of a warning of coming calamities; sometimes a call to arms; and sometimes, as with the "jubilee trumpet," it would be a message of joy.

The fact that the trumpet which is associated with the second presence of Christ is called the "trump of God," would indicate that it has to do with events with which God is directly connected. Daniel says that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom." Ah yes, the God of heaven is doing something; and His "trumpet," sounding through His agencies, is calling attention to it. The great events announced by the "trump of God,"

cover the entire thousand-year period of Christ's second presence.

Finishing of the Mystery

The "trump of God" evidently is the same trumpet that is sounded by the seventh angel of Revelation 10:7 and 11:15. There we are told that when this angel sounds, the "mystery of God is finished." We have already noted that Christ, in certain fulfillment of His promise to serve His people with special truths at the time of His second presence, has indeed furnished His faithful watchers of today with many choice portions of truth, which fact has greatly rejoiced their hearts. The finishing of "the mystery of God" seems but another way of calling our attention to the foregoing great fact. Never before since the death of the apostles and the great "falling away from the faith" that followed, has the mystery of God concerning the church's part in the great work of reconciliation been clearly understood.

Again, when the seventh trumpet sounded, "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign over them for ever and for ever." (Rev. 11:15.) Christ's Kingdom of peace would not be fully established when this trumpet proclamation is made. This is evident from the fact that in the 18th verse the nations of earth at that time are said to be "angry," and that "God's wrath" would then be visited upon them. Clearly then a period of time was to elapse between the time when Jesus assumes His invisible control over the kingdoms of the world and when His mighty authority finally establishes universal peace and happiness. It is during this early period of His presence that the proclamation of His Kingdom is made and the nations are "dashed to pieces."

Blow Ye the Trumpet!

Many of the prophecies of the New Testament are based upon those of the Old Testament; and this is particularly true of the "trumpet" prophecies. In the prophecy of Joel, chapter 2, verses 1, 2, we read: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy Mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand: A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains."

In the foregoing prophecy we have a combination of clouds, darkness, gloominess—a time when "men's hearts are failing them for fear"—and the blowing of the trumpet. The trumpet is blown as a result of the Lord's command. But who, in the great divine arrangement, is to blow this symbolic trumpet? Who is it that recognizes the mystery of God as being finished? Who is it that announces the early dawn of the great antitypical jubilee day? Who is it that is commanded to "sound an alarm in Zion"—for the benefit of both the true and the professed people of God? We answer that the testimony of the Lord's Word overwhelmingly shows that all these precious

privileges are to belong to the "watchers" among God's people.

Can You Read the "Signs"?

The title "watchmen," as that term is applied to the saints of the Gospel age, is derived from the ancient custom of setting watchmen upon the walls of fortified cities. These watchmen were there to look out for approaching dangers by night, and they also were the first to recognize the coming of dawn and to announce the approaching new day. How aptly all this pictures the glorious privileges of the Lord's "watchmen" down here at this end of the age! It is these watchmen who now note the signs of the Lord's presence, who proclaim the glad message of jubilee to a dying world, and who sound the warning of impending doom upon Satan's tottering empire.

Now have these watchmen actually seen the signs of the approaching day, and have they made proclamation of that fact? Yea, verily; for half a century just such a message has been going forth. From city to city and from nation to nation has it gone, until it has encircled the entire earth. Thousands have heard and have rejoiced, as they themselves also took up the glad refrain. Ah yes, the "Millennial Dawn," how thoroughly did the people come to know about it! True, few but the watchers themselves have appreciated the significance of what has been going on, and many have scoffed. But so it was in the "days of Noah." And, as illustrated by Lot's wife, some of the watchers seem inclined to look back upon the burning world and wonder if it is actually being destroyed. The sounding of the trumpet does not imply that its message would be believed by all those who hear it.

The Revelation

But the "watchers" are expected to read the signs long before others know what is going on. Now if Jesus were literally to appear up in the sky, and in such a miraculous manner that every literal eye could not help but see Him, then the "watchers" would have not the slightest advantage over the remainder of mankind. But this is not the picture the Bible presents. And the manner of our watching indicates the manner of our seeing. We are instructed to watch Bible prophecy. Now surely we are not asked to watch the *prophecies* only to find out later that others as well as we can see the Lord in the sky, whether they watched for Him or not.

Jesus said, "watch, for ye know not the hour your Lord doth come." This implies that if they continue to watch they may know when He comes. The text also suggests most clearly that those who do not watch will not know when He comes; hence the necessity of watching in order to know when He is present. Some in the past have been foolish enough to ascend to a mountain top and watch the literal sky on a given date, in order to "see" the Lord's return. But Bible Students today know that the true way to watch is to closely scrutinize Bible prophecy, and compare its prophecies with past and current events which are in fulfilment—meanwhile maintaining an humble, prayerful condition of heart and mind before

the Lord. Manifestly the second presence of the Lord was intended to be revealed by those events for which the saints were commanded to watch, else what would be the value of their watching?

We do not believe there has been as yet a *complete* fulfilment of all that is symbolized in the blowing of the "trump of God." Indeed that work will not be complete until the very end of the Millennial age. But this and all other foretold signs that were to mark the Lord's second presence have at least commenced to manifest themselves. As the progress of these events continues, there eventually will come the complete *revelment* of the presence of earth's new King, when, as already noted, all people shall recognize Him. This complete revelation of Christ is described in the Bible by the use of the Greek word *apokalupsis*.

When the *apokalupsis* or revelation of the presence of Christ to the whole world occurs, the circumstantial evidence will be so overwhelming, so irresistible and so irrefutable that even those who have *not* watched for it will then become aware of that great event. What special privilege the *watchers* may have in connection with this final and complete revelation of Christ to the world, we do not know; but certainly every true saint of God will be on the alert, then and *now*, to embrace every opportunity, yea to *make* opportunities, to proclaim the glad fact of the approaching Kingdom of blessings, as well as to declare the intervening "day of vengeance of our God."

VI

Every true Christian from Pentecost to the present time has had the hope of being eventually exalted and glorified with Jesus. That this exaltation or glorification is to take place relatively soon after the beginning of the *parousia* of the Lord, is clearly stated in the Bible. The announcement of Jesus to the disciples in the text at the beginning of this article, makes this point plain—"And if I go... I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The expression, "where I am," evidently refers to exaltation rather than to location. Although the glorified saints will have access to the heavenly courts, yet Jesus was not here saying that He was coming merely to take the saints back to heaven with Him. If this were the case He would have said, "where I *have been*, ye may be also."

Exaltation of the Saints

In this text Jesus is referring to His own highly exalted *position* or official station in the Kingdom, and was assuring His faithful disciples that they too would be exalted with Him. We already have noted the fact that at the time of His resurrection Jesus was "highly exalted, far above angels, principalities and powers," in order that He might become the new spiritual Ruler of the earth, supplanting Satan the "prince of this (evil) world." Hence it is this very exalted station, "at the right hand of power," to which He refers in the words, "that where I *am*, ye may be also." The Scriptures specifically state that every true Christian may share this high position of honor and glory with Jesus—conditional however on

the fact that they now willingly and faithfully lay down their lives in His service.

The time when the church was to receive this high reward is clearly indicated by the Apostle Paul, as follows: ("I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me *at that day*: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:7,8.) "At that day," then, is the time of the exaltation of the church. Not *before* that day, nor *after* that day.

VI

God has a definite period in His plan for the accomplishment of each feature of His purpose, and the time for the glorification of the church is at the end of the Gospel age and in the early dawning of the Millennial age. It would be unreasonable to suppose that the expression, "that day," means some particular moment of time down here at the end of the age, or even some literal "last day" of twenty-four hours. Traditional theology from the dark ages is responsible for such absurd interpretations, but an understanding of the divine plan now gives us a saner view of how God will fulfil this and all other blessed promises in His Word.

"Caught Up" to Meet Him "In the Air"

In 1 Thessalonians 5:15-17 Paul again emphasizes the fact that the glorification of the saints could not take place until the end of the age, and some time after the beginning of Christ's *parousia*. We have already discussed the "shout," and the "trump," mentioned in this passage; but now let us note carefully what it says about the reward of the saints. The apostle shows that those true disciples who are alive when the Lord's *parousia* begins will "not prevent," or precede, those who are asleep in death, but rather that the resurrection of the sleeping saints will precede the exaltation of the living saints. He says, "the dead in Christ shall rise *first*."

"Then," continues the apostle, "we which are alive and *remain* (after the presence of the Lord begins) shall be caught up together with them (the resurrected saints) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Some have contended that because the Greek word translated "together" in this passage is capable of being translated "at the same time," we should expect that this "rapture" of the saints would be an instantaneous event, for both the living and the dead. Such reasoning, however, fails to take into consideration the great scope of accomplishments the apostle is here describing, and which manifestly covers a considerable period of time.

The Greek word translated "together" in the foregoing text is *hama*. The same word is used in 1 Timothy 5:13, and is there translated "withal." We quote: "And *withal* (*hama*) they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." The context shows that Paul

here was discussing the perverse course of certain young widows who had come among God's people, and who for a time perhaps had shown evidence of true piety, but later turned out to be trouble makers; "for," says Paul, "when they have *begun* (indicating a gradual departure from the faith) to wax wanton against Christ," etc. It is then "withal (*hama*) they learn to be idle," etc. There is no thought of instantaneousness in this language. Paul was describing a period of time during which those widows were beginning to "wax wanton against Christ," and at the same time they also were learning to be idle mischief-makers—not before, nor after some event, but during that time.

Now Paul's thought is precisely the same in respect to the time of glorification of the church. He sought to guard us against the error that some saints would be glorified at the beginning of the age, some throughout the age, and some at the end of the age. He was showing us that it is not true that each saint is to be glorified as soon as he dies, but that the saints who die throughout the age must remain "dead in Christ" until the end of the age, and then the dead and the living will be changed at the same time—that is, during the same *period*, but not necessarily at the same instant. Of course, those who had been asleep in death would then receive their change "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" and the same would be true of each living saint who should die "from henceforth" during that same blessed period, otherwise known as "the last days" during which Christ would be present. Daniel 12:1 gives the same thought. First, Michael stands up. Then comes the time of trouble; and then, "at *that time* thy people shall be delivered."

Glorified During the Time of Trouble

Yes, it would be at that same time, during which the symbolic shout and voice and the trumpet are being heard, that the saints shall be "caught up"—glorified, exalted—"in (or amid) the clouds" which will accompany Christ's second presence. No, no, not literal clouds! The apostle is simply assuring us that this final glorification of all the church class is to be completed during that time in which the clouds of the great final trouble would be causing all the tribes of the earth to mourn. He also shows that the church's glorification will be completed before the time of trouble has become so severe as to awaken the whole world to the fact that a new invisible King has taken control of earth's tangled affairs. Yes, when He is ultimately revealed to the world as earth's glorious Ruler, the apostle says that the church also "appear with Him in glory."—Col. 3:4.

Thus the church is to meet the Lord "in the air"—not necessarily the literal atmosphere, for all these terms are *symbolic*. The apostle himself gives us the key to this symbol, when he tells us that Satan is now "the prince of the power of the *air*." (Eph. 2:2.) As we already have seen, Satan now is the powerful but wicked spiritual ruler or prince of this world. His spiritual or invisible rulership is aptly symbolized by *air* or wind, which is powerful yet unseen. The same

symbol is applied to Christ's invisible rule, which is to supplant Satan's invisible empire. Our Lord's return to earth is for that very purpose, and the saints are to meet or join Him in that righteous rule. Christ and His church then will constitute the "new heavens," the new "power of the air." So in thus describing the exaltation of the church Paul is but reminding us of the fact that all the saints are to be exalted to Kingdom glory with Jesus during the period of His second presence. "That where I am"—as Jesus expressed the same thought—"there ye may be also."

"And so shall we *ever* be with the Lord," Paul concludes. Now if literal clouds and literal air is what Paul means in this passage, and Jesus is thus to be suspended up in the sky in full view of every literal eye, and the church is to be snatched up there with Him, it also would mean that they will remain there under those conditions *forever*; because, says Paul, "so," or in this way, "shall they *ever* be with the Lord." Such, of course, is not what this text means. But, thank God, the church will continue forever as the joint-heir of Christ in all the glory that will ever be His—throughout the Millennial age as the invisible rulers of mankind, and during the "ages to come," in various other works of honor and glory.—Rev. 5:10; 20:6; Eph. 2:6,7.

VII

Never since the days of Jesus and the apostles have the Lord's people had so many things to encourage and gladden their hearts as have those faithful "watchers" today who can see and interpret "the signs of the presence of the Son of man" and know thereby "that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." (Luke 21:31.) This article has not attempted to enumerate all the signs, nor has it elaborated upon any of them in much detail. These details have been published elsewhere and are quite familiar to most of our readers. We herein have briefly noted, however, more than a score of signs which the Scriptures have foretold, all of which are now in course of fulfilment before our very eyes:

(1) We have scarcely mentioned the chronological evidence that indicates where we are on the stream of time, and which shows that we are now in the dawning of the *seventh* thousand-year day, wherein the world shall find rest and peace and health and life. We have not entered into a discussion of this phase of the subject, because that is a considerable theme in itself.

(2) Attention has been called to the "1335 days" of Daniel's prophecy, and to the "blessedness" which was then to come to God's people—now being abundantly fulfilled.

(3) We have noted the present 'increase in knowledge'; (4) the 'running to and fro'; (5) and the great 'time of trouble'; all of which the prophet said would mark "the time of the end," and which prophecy Jesus Himself indicated would constitute a sign of His second presence—all of which we now witness.

(6) We have seen the foretold "distress of nations"; (7) the "sea and waves roaring"; (8) and

"men's hearts failing them for fear"; (9) and while they cry, "Peace, peace," they realize there is no peace.

(10) We see 'the powers of heaven shaken,' and (11) 'the mourning of the tribes of the earth.'

(12) We behold the successive spasms of "travail"; (13) the "clouds" amid which Christ was to come; and (14) the 'melting' of the elements of the earth and heavens as a result of His having (15) uttered His "voice."

(16) We are aware that He has descended "with a shout"; (17) with "the voice of the archangel"; and that (18) "the trump of God" is now being sounded.

(19) In these days not only has the Christ mystery come to be fully understood by reason of the unfolding of the philosophy of the ransom, but (20) "the mystery of iniquity," the antichrist, has now been fully revealed, and the fact as to how it constitutes the anti-christ is now understood. (21) We also see that institution now being "consumed by the spirit of His mouth," and (22) gradually being "consumed by the brightness of His presence."

(23) We see the revival of Zionistic hopes, which, while not particularly mentioned in the foregoing article, is nevertheless one of the outstanding signs that were foretold by the Lord for this day.

(24) Yet, notwithstanding all these fulfilled signs in these "days of the Son of man," we also see that in these last days there are "scoffers" who question the assurance of His presence, even as the Apostle Peter prophesied.

(25) Yet, best of all, we find that the Lord Himself has girded Himself and is serving His faithful watchers with "meat in due season" as He promised to do during His *parousia*. Yes, now, for the first time since the apostles fell asleep, all the fundamental truths of His Word have been clarified and unified into one complete, harmonious picture, thereby disclosing to our enraptured gaze the marvelous divine plan of the ages. Yes, brethren, we are actually living in the days of the *presence* of the Son of man; and His full revealment to the unsuspecting world is but a matter of a short while. "Blessed are your eyes if they see" these things.

"Comfort One Another With These Words"

Dear reader, in this discussion we have endeavored as best we could to obey Paul's injunction to comfort the brethren with this glorious fact of the Lord's presence and the near-establishment of His Kingdom. The things we have set forth are not new to many of you; although we trust also that some hearts may be made glad by learning herein about the Lord's *parousia* for the first time. Some who read these words may have been rejoicing for years in the knowledge that Christ is now present—and are still rejoicing. Others, on account of the stress of circumstances that have been brought about by unexpected developments among the brethren, may have begun to wonder, or perhaps to *doubt*, whether He is present. Indeed, some who once rejoiced in these present truths now openly deny that there is any evidence of the pres-

ence of Christ, or that the Kingdom is very near.

No, in this article we have presented nothing new or additional to that which already has been said—these same glorious truths now 'having' been proclaimed throughout the earth for more than fifty years—yet it is our hope that the increased clearness of the "signs" of His presence, which can be appreciated now by a retrospective view of their development over a period of half a century, will help to arouse all brethren to renewed enthusiasm for the truth and encourage in them a greater devotion to God. Writers in earlier times have said that if Christians could but keep expecting that the Lord may return at any moment, how careful it would make them in regard to their service for and devotion to Him. Then how much more should this be true when we now can recognize the evidences, so clearly discernible to the careful watchers, that *He is already here* and is serving us with "meat in due season" as He promised! We hope that just such faithfulness to our consecration vows will be inspired in the hearts of all who read this discussion of what the Lord is doing in these "last days."

Let Us Examine Ourselves

Nor tongue nor pen can describe the height of glory, honor and blessing that soon will be the portion of every saint of God who tirelessly continues to fulfil his consecration pledge. Are we faithfully fulfilling our vow of consecration? Are we daily suffering with Christ, in order that we may soon reign with Him? Suffering with Christ is possible only to the extent that we now actively represent Christ and His message in the earth! Those who are to "live and reign" with Him are those, and those only, who are "*beheaded* for the *witness* of Jesus and for the Word of God." Is that beheading daily and hourly true in our lives? Or are we shrinking back from the privilege of sacrifice?

Due to loss of faith and vision, many who formerly were enthusiastic about the truth are now luke-warm and indifferent. It is our hope that this article may

help to awaken such to a new realization of the fact that we *do have the Truth*, and that it has come to us because the time has arrived for the Lord to be present and serve us.—Luke 12:37.

Brethren, those of us who still have an undimmed vision and full faith in Present Truth, as well as those whose interest has lagged but may yet be restored: Let us now, each and all of us, bestir ourselves to a greater and more sincere effort than ever before, to raise high the standard of truth for the people. (Isa. 62:10; 52:7.) The winds of false doctrines are blowing more strongly now than ever they have since the "last days" began. Shall we placidly retire into a lethargy of spiritual indifference, refusing to face or discuss the Lord's presence and other important timely doctrines, for fear that they may cause some controversy; or shall we stand boldly and valiantly for Present Truth; conscious of the fact that the Lord has not fooled His people, and that what He has served them has been real food and not stones. When we see the enemy thus "coming in like a flood," shall we not put and keep our all upon the altar of sacrifice, in an effort to protect and serve God's consecrated people?

Has this discussion been a blessing to you? Has it increased or renewed your faith in the great harvest message of present truth? If so, will you not now cooperate with your brethren more fully, yea, do everything possible, to help put this timely truth into the hands of others who may need it far more than you yourself? Let each remember that there are some who never as yet have heard this glad message of the Lord's presence which has so gladdened your own consecrated heart. There may be "one here and there" of these whose heart you can make glad today. The fact that it requires a greater individual sacrifice to serve the Lord now, is all the more reason why that greater sacrifice should be made. The Lord is not selecting those who sing His praises only when it doesn't cost them anything. Rather He is looking for those who are willing to lay down life itself for their Master. Are all of us among that faithful class today?

THE DAWN AND ITS MINISTRY



IN ORDER to publish in full the timely article on "Our Lord's Second Presence," much of the regular material of THE DAWN has been omitted from this issue. Regular editions of THE DAWN usually contain the following department: "News and Views"—a review of world events in the light of prophecy; "The Fact Finder"—in which Biblical questions are answered; "The Children's Hour"—an interesting Bible story for the young folks; and "Our Biblical Dialog"—discussions of important Bible topics. "The Christian Life" department of THE DAWN is greatly reduced in this issue—usually it contains four articles specially designed for Christian encouragement and upbuilding.

We claim no human authority for this ministry, believing that all consecrated followers of the Master are authorized by the Word and by the holy spirit to be witnesses for Him and for His truth, and thus to

serve the brethren, as they have opportunity. Nor do we claim any special revelation from the Lord, but invite readers to prove all they read by the Bible.

We do not claim to be a "one and only channel" of truth, nor are we in any way a church organization. We are merely *publishers* of the glad tidings of the Kingdom; and we insist that no publishing company has Scriptural right to interfere with the church arrangements of God's people. We are glad if THE DAWN and other literature published by us is found to be helpful to a better understanding of the Bible and to Christian growth, but urge that our readers do not make the acceptance of our publications a test of fellowship among any of the brethren. We are not seeking to make "Dawn Christians," and are doing what we can to discourage the factional spirit among believers. You can enjoy THE DAWN without feeling that you are tied to a human organization.



The Christian Life

Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves (the restless, discontented) roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking forward to the things coming upon the earth (society); for the powers of the heavens (ecclesiasticism) shall be shaken. . . . When ye see these things come to pass, then know that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Look up, lift up your heads, rejoice, for your deliverance draweth nigh—

Luke 21: 25-28,31

THE MORNING STAR OF THE RESURRECTION

HERE are times when every Christian experiences failure—and not necessarily because he has found in his conduct some particular sin, either of commission or of omission, wherewith to reproach himself. He has been endeavoring to do his best. He has “hitched his chariot to a star,” and at the same time has sought to keep its wheels firmly planted on the earth. He has seen the heavenly ladder of communication with the world above, with the angels of God ascending and descending thereon. God has given him “songs in the night” and a vision of truth calculated to bring joy to the mind and heart. Strength has been his for the way, and he has been buoyed up by a resolution to do and to dare. He has felt as did the Apostle Peter when he said to Jesus, “Though all men forsake Thee, yet will not I forsake Thee.”

Then, suddenly, there is a change in circumstances. There is a sudden impasse in his affairs, unforeseen and undreamed. The sun of favor seems suddenly darkened at noonday. He begins to wonder as to what is taking place. Yesterday all was bright; it seemed that something was being accomplished; life was worth living—but today! Everything seems different!

The Prophets Were Tested

Elijah had such an experience. How brave he had been, how utterly fearless, how strong. How he mocked the false God Baal and his worshippers. His faith and confidence glowed like the sun. He achieved a notable triumph through the power of his God. The fire had come down in the sight of all and had consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and had licked up the very water in the trench. And the false priests, the deceivers of the people, had been slain. How could a victory have been more thorough, more complete?

In the next scene we find Elijah sitting under a juniper tree in the wilderness, praying that he might die, in the words, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers.” Then, later, when God spoke to him, he said, “I have been very jealous for the Lord of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the

edge of the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”

When we come to consider events in connection with the life and death of Jesus, we find that the greatest brightness which the world had ever known was followed by the greatest darkness. The light had shone in the darkness even though the darkness had comprehended it not. The Master had said, “I am the light of the world”; and His disciples had seen in Him something that they had never seen before. Therefore it was, when He said to them, “Will ye also go away?” they replied, “Lord to whom shall we go but unto Thee? Thou only hast the words of eternal life.”

Tests at the First Advent

The little company had followed Jesus closely, watching His every move, trying to understand His every word. They had seen Him feed the multitude, turn water into wine, calm the raging waves of Gennesareth, cast out devils, heal the sick, raise the dead. No man had ever spoken as He had. He was the very greatest of all the prophets. They looked to Him to raise the standard of Israel, perform some miracle that would exalt Him in the eyes of their nation, and then at the head of invincible forces, scatter their enemies as chaff is scattered before the strong winds of October.

Then adverse currents had set in, and these had come just when least expected. Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem should have been a harbinger of success. The people had cried out jubilantly in His honor, showing that they wanted Him for their King: “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” O happy day for the people of God! So long had they waited for this; and now it was here. The populace is wild with joy. And He rides into the capital city in the very manner foretold by the prophet of God centuries before.

“The tumult and the shouting dies
The captains and the kings depart.
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
A humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!”

Ah, yes, there are things we don't want to forget—things that we must not forget; and one of these is that the Son of God came into Jerusalem at the time when He was due to be there; that He came unto His own and His own received Him not; that He was the harmless, spotless Lamb of God; that His life had been spent in doing only good; and that, as the undefiled and perfect One, He offered Himself to the people; to be their King if they would have it so, and to bless them with untold blessings. That indeed is an unforgettable fact to those who love the truth of God.

Then came the swift change in events. Jealousy, conspiracy and plotting became manifest. The darkness was about to settle down. Jesus is betrayed by one of His own followers. He is led before Pilate and before Herod. He is mocked and abused. He climbs the steep of Calvary. He is nailed to the cross. He hangs there, a spectacle to make the angels weep. It is the greatest mountain scene of all time. There is earthquake and darkness over the land. There is a reeling of the crosses, and terror strikes to the hearts of the people. The Son of God is dead. Hear it, angels and men—He is DEAD!

Mary Magdalene

Where are the disciples? Where is His mother? Where is Mary Magdalene? No doubt these are all near at hand. Mary Magdalene lingers long near the cross. He had done much for this Mary. Just how much, only Himself and Mary knew. The Bible indicates that Mary Magdalene had been under the influence of evil spirits. However, she was not the Mary who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and dried them with the hair of her head, and of whom it was said, "She is a sinner." Mary of Magdala was probably a rich woman, one who enjoyed the world and its pursuits of legitimate pleasure, until Jesus came into her life; and then there was a change. And none but those who experience such a change can comprehend what it means. The entire course of Mary's life was turned. She for the first time beheld the impersonation of truth. The light that shone upon her consciousness did not have its source in this world. It was indeed above the brightness of the noonday sun.

In the heart of this rich woman of Magdala there were depths that had never before been sounded. It takes truth to sound out the depths of any heart. Mary had capacity for the greatest thing in all God's universe—she had capacity to love. We talk of what **we** call the "the deep things" of life, and of truth, but there is nothing so deep as love. The apostle speaks of the "lengths, breadths, heights, and depths" of divine love; but actually it is immeasurable. And when the wireless waves of love divine come to us from the great unfathomable ocean of love, they arouse us from a long, death-like slumber. We begin to realize that there is a new world awaiting us, and that it is God's world. Into this new realm God has opened for us the door, and it is for us to step over the threshold with reverent tread and enter in. The old world is gone. We are now in the Palace

Beautiful, in and under the love and sanctifying power of God.

So it was that the heart of this woman of the world was touched, yea, and stirred in all its depths. She knew that this was a higher love than anything this world could own. When Jesus had released her from the nefarious spiritual bondage that had enslaved her, she was able to appraise the relative values of things. Truth and faith and love were on one side of her line of life, and all other things found their place upon the other side. Verily Mary of Magdala had come to her own at last; she had found her peace and the light of her joy in the Son of God. She had discovered a treasure that the world could not take away from her.

Standing for Him Despite the Cost

Yes, Mary stood close to the cross. Perhaps we too would have done the same had we been there. Perhaps we would have whispered messages of love and devotion to Jesus in His dying hours. It would have been a precious thing to do, but there were not many who stood near the Master in His time of greatest need. It takes great love to enable one to do things like that. Such love is utterly forgetful of self, and thinks only of the object of its devotion and the good it can do. Those who would have stood near the cross when Jesus died, and would have tried to give by their looks some assurance of their appreciation of His sacrifice, such persons are the ones who have stood by the cross from that time to this, and these are they who are standing by the truth at the present time.

We are not told what Mary felt when Jesus died. Her tender heart must have been rent with the keenest anguish. Jesus had shown her what real life meant. He had fulfilled His words spoken to a Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob: "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."

Mary was faithful to her Lord's memory. Very early in the morning, "when it was yet dark," she went to the tomb. To her amazement, the tomb was empty. She then went away and found Peter and then John, both of whom ran to the sepulchre. Mary then returned to the tomb, after the men and other women had gone. Then it was that she saw two angels in shining garments. They spoke to her and asked why she wept. She replied, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." Then Mary turned away and saw a man whom she took to be the gardener. She said to him, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away."

Perhaps she thought that they didn't want the body of the Master in the rich man's tomb any longer. Well, she, Mary, would take care of that precious body. When in life He had done all He could for her, and now she would do all that lay in her power to show respect and love for Him. Love's attitude is

to be ever watching for some service whereby to manifest and prove its quality. Jesus, though dead, meant more to her than did any one who was alive. Ah, Mary, look more closely! Look again at that gardener! Ah, Mary, if you only knew! And, thank God, you are to know forthwith.

Jesus said just one word to her—"Mary." And that one word was enough. Suddenly, as by magic, a whole world of revelation came to her. This was no gardener; this was her Master, her Lord, the One whom she had looked for in the tomb in vain. He was there before her; He was speaking to her. And Mary fell at His feet, crying, "Master."

The Manger, the Cross, the Empty Tomb

There are three things that especially call to the Christian and lead his thoughts to a place apart from the world. The first of these is Bethlehem, where he stands beside the humble shepherds and contemplates the colossal fact that the babe before him is One who as the only begotten Son of God left the glories and the harmonies of heaven and for the blessing of men condescended to be born in a manger. The second is Mount Calvary, cross-crowned, shrouded in unnatural darkness, yet bearing a light for human hearts beyond the brightness of day. And the third is the empty tomb. These three things speak with a language that finds its way into the innermost recesses of the Christian's soul. They are things that stand in a place by themselves.

It is the third of these—the empty tomb—to which we invite the Christian's attention at the present time. Jesus had died, to be sure. And this was not the first time the world had tried to kill truth embodied in a man. Since the world began every real exponent of truth has to some degree come under the frown of men. The prophets and other faithful ones of the Jewish era had this experience, and the last of the prophets, John the Baptist, was beheaded in prison. Jesus in the power of righteousness eclipsed all the rest, so He could not hope to escape the world's wrath. Indeed, He had no such hope or expectation. He knew that He was to die, and He had come to earth for that express purpose.

But the tomb could not hold Him for long. When Mary of Magdala came to anoint the body, she found a living Christ. She did not understand. All she could do was to worship and rejoice. We may now fancy ourselves in her place. The tomb is empty. Then we turn away, and we see the Master. He speaks to us, calling us by our name; and the whole world is transformed! We have entered into the glorious temple of the joy that He alone can give.

Truth Must Not Be Confined

The Morning Star of the Resurrection is very beautiful and very bright. The Master says, "I am the bright and Morning Star." His brightness has given the impression of strength and of life. Creedal tombs have tried to hold Him, but have failed. Dogmatical ecclesiastics have tried to sepulture the truth that represents Him, but their endeavors have come to naught. He has riven the bars of the tomb. The

confining walls of stone decrees upreared around Him during the Dark Ages have fallen down. He has emerged, for He is alive forever more. He is the mighty leader of the Church of the living God, and He has given the harvest truth today to assure us that He has kept His promise and has come back to us, just as He kept His promise over nineteen centuries ago when He said that He would arise from the dead.

Dear brother, dear sister, have you caught the impression that Jesus is alive, that the *truth* is alive? Or have you entombed the truth and left it in the ground to mould? The Master spoke of one who buried his talent in the earth. He did not actually destroy it, but he hid it away. And he did wrong, for the Master called him a slothful and wicked servant. Truth is a living entity; it bears the power of resurrection; it points to a living, achieving, conquering Christ. It stands before us as Jesus stood before Mary Magdalene. It gives assurance that it is beyond the power of man to harm it. If we follow it, we shall be led to life's crowning victory. There is nothing but darkness and death behind us; while before us there is the full glory of endless light and life.

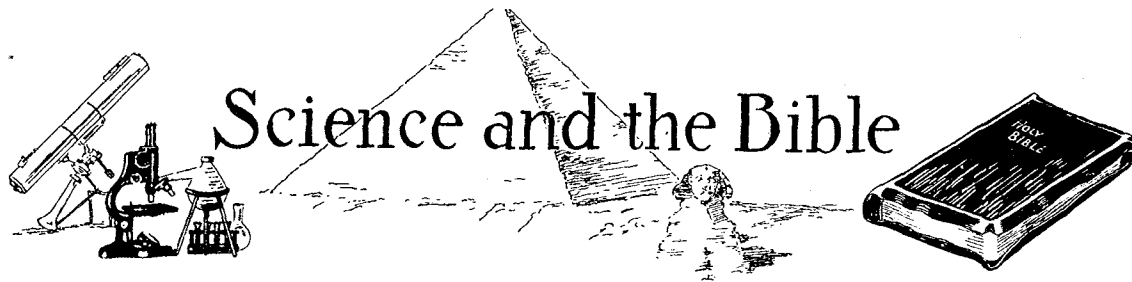
Risen With Christ

The apostle intimates that we are "risen with Christ," and that therefore we should seek the things that are above. Don't you think that in a sense Mary was risen with Christ, because of the fact that in spirit she entered into the joy of that resurrection? Paul said that it was his desire to know the power of Christ's resurrection. He could do that only by entering into it by faith and by devotion to the divine will. There is a sense in which one may enter into art, into music, and into poetry; and unless he does this, he cannot really know these things. It is not enough to look at the life of Jesus, with a certain degree of admiration; we must enter into it: we must follow the Master. He thought upon things that are righteous and true, and He can enable us to do likewise.

He is indeed "the bright and morning Star"; but we need not think that we cannot follow this Star because it so far outshines us in beauty. Thank God, we *can* follow it. Mary Magdalene left the world and followed it; so likewise did the fishermen of Galilee. They were sinful men, but they had loyalty and love in their hearts, and because of this fact God sent to them the mighty power of His revealing truth, even the holy spirit of divine promise, that it might in due time guide His people into all truth.

God's people follow Jesus away from the tomb. They cannot dwell in darkness, but must have the sunlight of His presence. Plants that have been all winter in a south window, where they had the sun, look bright and flourishing. It is cheering to see the rich verdure and luxuriant bloom of such flowers. Plants that have been all winter in the cellar look withered, leafless and dead; although they are not actually dead. Plants may live a long time in the dark and in an uncongenial atmosphere, though they

(Continued on page 33)



ORIGIN OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

WHENCE came the manuscripts from which the Holy Scriptures were translated? How may we be sure that they are authentic? Who authorized these particular manuscripts to be gathered together into one book, and when was it done? How may we be positive that they made the right selection in every instance? Is it possible that when the "church fathers" canonized the Scriptures they may have included some manuscripts that should have been omitted, and omitted some that should have been included? These are fundamental questions that every Christian should squarely face; and we must seek a satisfactory answer to each one of them if we would have a faith that is unassailable in the Bible as God's inspired Word.

Our Common Version English Bible was translated and published about 1611 A. D., by authority of King James I. On its title page the translators put these words: "The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, translated out of the original tongues, and with the former translations, diligently compared and revised." The "former translations" referred to are those made by Wyclif, Tyndale, Coverdale and Luther; also the Geneva Bible and the Bishop's Bible; all of which made their appearance during the century or so preceding James I; and also the Latin Vulgate, which these other translators had used.

It is acknowledged, of course, that none of the actual *original* manuscripts of either the Old or the New Testaments are in existence today, nor did any of the foregoing English or German translators ever see the originals. All they had available from which to make their translations were Hebrew, Greek or Latin *copies*, and it is also doubtful if any of these copies were made directly from the originals; more likely, all were copies made from earlier *copies*. Are we justified, then, in placing dependence in any of our present translations, inasmuch as they were not made directly from original sources? That is a question that is often asked by the critics, and it will be the purpose in this and succeeding articles to attempt a reasonably satisfactory reply.

Did Jesus Use Our Old Testament Books?

Let us first confine our attention to the Hebrew Scriptures. Is there any evidence that the books contained in our modern English versions of the Old Testament are the very same books that constituted the Hebrew Scriptures of Jesus' day, and which He

approved and expounded to His disciples? If they are not the same books, then Christians certainly would be justified in doubting their authenticity. But if these *are* the same books which Jesus, at the age of 12, read and discussed with the doctors, and which He later used in His ministry and taught to His followers, then we can have confidence in them; knowing that He who lived "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" would not have expounded and approved any writings that did not have upon them the genuine stamp of divinity.

Throughout the centuries preceding Luther and Tyndale there were found hundreds of copies of the Old Testament Scriptures, in the Hebrew and Greek languages, preserved in Spain, Italy, Russia and elsewhere. It is true that all copies now extant were made since the dispersion of the Jews, which occurred A. D. 70; but it is not difficult to trace these back to their sources in the time of Christ, and earlier. History shows that all these writings were actually in use by the Christians of the very *first* century, during the lifetime of the apostles; and we also know that the apostles in their own writings, and Jesus Himself, have repeatedly cited passages from the various books of the Old Testament.

Did Papists Canonize our Scriptures?

It seems to be a popular notion among many people that at some particular gathering of Catholic cardinals or prelates back in the dark ages, these papal ecclesiastics decided to maul over a lot of old musty manuscripts and then take a vote on which ones should be accepted as genuine and which ones should be rejected as spurious; and that in such haphazard and arbitrary fashion the Holy Scriptures were "canonized" for Christian use. Nothing could be farther from the facts. No Papal conclave ever had anything to do with the question of deciding for us whether the present books of the Old and New Testaments are divinely inspired.

It is true that the papists *attempted* to pass on that question at the Council of Trent, in 1546 A. D., but they made a sorry mess of it. That council, on April 8, 1546, voted almost unanimously that "church traditions" should be held as of equal authority with the written Word of God. Furthermore this council declared that the Latin Vulgate, which contained not only the Holy Scriptures but also various Apocryphal writings of admittedly doubtful authority, should be accepted in toto as "canonical" and sacred; and de-

creed that "if anyone shall not receive these same books entire, with all their parts, as they are wont to be read in the Catholic church, and the old Latin Vulgate edition, as sacred and canonical, and shall knowingly and intentionally despise the *traditions* aforesaid, let him be accursed."

Jerome himself, when he translated the Latin Vulgate back in the fourth century, did not accept the Apocryphal books as inspired—he simply put them into the back part as an addenda, believing them to be good books for Christian reading but admitting that they were not to be regarded as Scripture. From his day forward even the papal hierarchy generally had looked upon the Apocrypha as uninspired. But the 5 cardinals and the 48 bishops who composed the Council of Trent (none of whom were in any way distinguished for learning) took it upon themselves to decide, by a hasty but overwhelming vote, that anyone who would not accept the Apocryphal books and all church *traditions* as of equal authority with the writings of the inspired prophets and apostles, shall be "accursed." Thus by their blundering vote they inadvertently anathematized Jerome himself, the translator of their Vulgate, and nearly all their early "church fathers," most of whom they had previously canonized as "saints." It is difficult to see how they could be saints and accursed at the same time.

What Books were Read in Early Church?

In these articles we expect to prove that the very same books that are now included in our King James Version of the Bible, and *none others*, were accepted and used by the Christian church in the very *first* century, while the apostles were still alive—including the Revelation of John. The historical evidence suggests the fact that John wrote the Apocalypse before he wrote his epistles and Gospel, and that all these were accepted as inspired writings even during his lifetime, as well as immediately after his death. But let us leave the New Testament writings for discussion in a subsequent article, and look now merely to the Old Testament Scriptures. Let us see what evidence we can find that the church in the days of Jesus and the apostles accepted the same books that we now have in our English versions of the Old Testament, and that they rejected the Apocryphal books as unauthentic.

The Apocryphal books which the Council of Trent endorsed as of equal authority with those of the ancient Hebrew canon, are: Tobit, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, Maccabees I and II, also some additions to Daniel and Esther. But Jerome, after translating them, was careful to explain that "they are not in the Hebrew canon"—although they were in the Greek Septuagint. And this same fact is also shown by many other Christian writers and critics of the first three centuries, as we shall see. But we need not depend merely upon such writers for our evidence; for the writers of the New Testament themselves sanction the Old Testament Scriptures—the five books of Moses, the various other historical and prophetic books, the Proverbs, and the Psalms, by making nearly a thousand references to them; but never once do they quote

from or allude to the aforementioned books of the Apocrypha. It is apparent that all of these Apocryphal books were in existence in the days of Jesus and the apostles, being included in the Septuagint version of the Hebrew Scriptures; but they carefully avoided mentioning them; although there are passages therein which would have afforded apt illustrations for their arguments had they wanted to make use of them.

Hebrew Scriptures of Jesus' Day

Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, mentions the various books of the accepted Hebrew canon as recognized in his day, and gives us numerous quotations from them. Although he is not always entirely accurate in his recording of historical events prior to his time, yet he should be a competent witness concerning facts which he personally knew to exist in his own day. He was born in 37 A. D., only three years after Christ's crucifixion, and spent his early life in Palestine. He was well educated, and commanded the Jewish forces in Galilee when Titus came with his army and laid siege to Jerusalem shortly before A. D. 70. After his surrender he went to Rome, made friends with the emperor, and was there recognized as a scholar. There he wrote his "Antiquities" and other works, which set forth the history of his people. Eusebius, the early Christian historian (264-340 A. D.), recognized the facts contained in the writings of Josephus, and quoted extensively from them.

Concerning the Sacred Scriptures of the Hebrews, Josephus, in his work against Apion (1:8), says:

"We have not innumerable books which contradict each other, but only *twenty-two*, which contain the history of all past times and are justly believed to be divine. *Five* of these belong to Moses, and contain his laws, and the history of the origin of mankind, and reach to his death. This is a period of nearly three thousand years. From the death of Moses to Artaxerxes, who, after Xerxes, reigned over the Persians, the prophets who lived after Moses wrote down the events of their times in *thirteen* books. The other *four* books contain hymns to God and precepts for men.

"From Artaxerxes to our own times our history has indeed been written; but *these* writings (i. e., Maccabees, etc.) are not esteemed worthy of the same credit as the former, because since that time we have no certain succession of prophets. . . . Though so long time has elapsed (since the writing of the law and the prophets), no one has ever dared to add to or take from them, or make any change in them whatever. It is as it were inborn in every Jew, from the very first origin of the nation, to consider these books as the doctrines of God, to stand by them constantly, and if need be, to die for them. It is no new thing to see the captives of our nation endure tortures and deaths of all kinds in the public theatres, rather than utter a word against our laws, or the records which contain them."

Josephus Corroborated by Christian Writers

Here we have the direct testimony of an eye-witness—a prominent Jew who lived in the days of the apostles—declaring that the Hebrew canon of sacred books, consisting of Moses and the prophets, was in existence in his day, and that they had been most

zealously guarded and preserved from ancient times. Josephus also makes many exact quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, which proves that the books he refers to are none other than the very same Pentateuch and prophecies which we have in our own versions of the Old Testament today.

Josephus calls attention to the fact that there are just 22 books in the Hebrew canon, corresponding to the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. His various quotations from them not only indicate the books he means, but we also have these same 22 books carefully listed by various Christian writers of the early centuries. It will be noted that of these books, Josephus says that 5 were by Moses, 13 were prophetic, and 4 were hymns and precepts. This is confirmed by other witnesses, who declare that the Hebrew canon was as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Genesis | 13. Isaiah |
| 2. Exodus | 14. Jeremiah (and Lamen- |
| 3. Leviticus | tations) |
| 4. Numbers | 15. Ezekiel |
| 5. Deuteronomy | 16. Daniel |
| 6. Joshua | 17. The Book of the 12 Min- |
| 7. Judges | or Prophets |
| 8. Ruth | 18. Job |
| 9. Samuel (I and II) | 19. Psalms of David |
| 10. Kings (I and II) | 20. Proverbs of Solomon |
| 11. Chronicles (I and II) | 21. Ecclesiastes |
| 12. Ezra (including Nehe- | 22. Songs of Solomon |
| miah and Esther) | |

Early Christian Records

Melito, leader or bishop of the church at Sardis, in 160 A. D., made a catalog of all of the Old Testament books then in use among the churches, and it agrees fully with the foregoing. Now remember, Christians were living in Melito's time who had known some of the apostles. Polycarp, who was chief elder or bishop of the church at Smyrna, did not die until 166 A. D., and he was a disciple of the Apostle John. He tells us that John personally installed him as elder at Smyrna. Doubtless Melito was well acquainted with Polycarp, since Sardis and Smyrna were only a few miles apart. Surely, then, Melito would not have listed these books unless they were in general use by the Christians of his time, and had been accepted since apostolic days. Thirty years later Serapion, bishop of Antioch, wrote that the Christians of his time were very careful not to accept any books but those which had received apostolic approval. He is quoted by Eusebius (6: 12).

Eusebius, the Christian historian who lived at Caesarea, in Palestine (264-340 A. D.), quotes both Melito and Josephus. Origen (185-254 A. D.) also gives us this same list of books for the Old Testament, and expressly excludes the Apocryphal books then in existence; as also had Josephus in the foregoing quotations. The Apocryphal books, as we have seen, certainly were known to these early writers; because the Septuagint or Greek version of the Scriptures, which was translated at Alexandria, Egypt, two centuries before Christ's day, contained them. Yet

they all ignore them as spurious, as also did Jesus and the apostles.

Then we have the careful testimony of Jerome (330-420 A. D.), the illustrious translator of the Latin Vulgate and clearly the greatest scholar of his day. After mastering Greek, Latin, Aramaic, Syriac and Hebrew, he spent thirty years in Palestine translating into Latin the Old Testament Scriptures directly from the carefully guarded Hebrew manuscripts—then in the hands of the Masoraic school of Hebrew scholars which had been established there since shortly after the dispersion in A. D. 70. In a letter which he wrote to his friend Paulinus in 394 A. D., Jerome lists all the books of the Hebrew canon, and his list contains exactly the same books found in our Common Version English Bible; and not one of the Apocryphal books is included.

Concerning the carefulness with which Jerome seems to have worked, he says in another letter, "I am not in the least conscious of having deviated from the Hebrew original." And again, "The present translation (Vulgate) follows no ancient translator, but will be found to reproduce the exact words of the original Hebrew." Jerome, because of his zeal for purity of the text, was the object of much abuse by Augustine, also by Siricius, the then bishop of Rome, who preferred the earlier, more familiar but poorly translated Latin versions which had been taken from the Greek Septuagint instead of from the Hebrew, and which contained many apocryphal additions which Jerome frankly rejected as unauthentic; even though he translated them as an appendix to his work. But it remained for the Council of Trent to "authoritatively" elevate these spurious additions to equal rank with the inspired Word. There vote, however, carries no weight with careful Bible students.

(To be continued)

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International Sunday School Lessons



THE RESURRECTION

April 21—Luke 24:1-12.

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments.

And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

He is not here, but is risen; remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee,

Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

And they remembered His words.

And returned unto the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women who were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Then arose Peter and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

GOLDEN TEXT: *I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.—Jo. 11:25*



HE first person to whom Jesus revealed Himself after His resurrection was Mary Magdalene. This woman was from Magdala, a town in Galilee. She had been obsessed by evil spirits, and Jesus

had given her deliverance from this insidious power. She was not the other Mary of whom it was said, "she was a sinner," who washed the Lord's feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.

It is believed that Mary Magdalene was a person of wealth. She loved the Master and devoted herself to His cause. She is said to have been "the last at the cross and the first at the tomb." At any rate, she was near the cross at the time of the crucifixion, and at the tomb early in the morning: "while it was yet dark."

At first glance the various accounts of our Lord's resurrection do not seem to harmonize. But it should be considered that the women entrusted with the work of embalming the body of Jesus lived in different parts of the city and therefore arrived at the tomb at different hours. First came Mary Magdalene, who then went and found Peter and John, both of whom ran to the sepulchre. After the men and women had left the tomb, Mary Magdalene returned thereto. Then it was that she saw the two angels.

No doubt the angels had been there during her previous visit to the sepulchre, but had not "appeared" to her. Probably holy angels had taken care of our Lord's body. These two at the tomb now appeared in shining garments so that it might be known that they were indeed heavenly angels and not human beings. But when the resurrected Jesus later disclosed Himself He did not appear in shining raiment but in ordinary clothes; for He wished to prove to His disciples that He was still the same Jesus that had been put to death.

After the angels had spoken to Mary, enquiring as to the cause of her grief, she turned to go away and beheld another person near by whom she supposed was the gardener—perhaps a servant of Joseph

of Arimathea. Thinking that her Lord's body had been taken away, she enquired where it was. Jesus then addressed her as "Mary." Then she knew Him, and cried, "Master"! Jesus said to her, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father."

Mary then hastened to tell the other disciples the good news. That same day Jesus appeared to a number of disciples in Jerusalem. He entered right in through the locked doors. He walked and talked with two of the brethren going to Emmaus, and then at the supper table vanished out of their sight. He was no longer a human being, but a spirit. He could come and go as the wind, and could "appear" at will. The Apostle Paul says that He was the "first fruits of the dead, the first fruits of them that slept."

Jesus says, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forever more, amen; and have the keys of death and of hades." Truly He had given Himself as a "ransom for all, to be testified in due time." And now God had raised Him up to be a Prince and a Saviour, that He might bring life and immortality to light through the gospel; and that He might in due time become the world's glorious King and bring forth millions from the sleep of death by virtue of the resurrection power vested in Him.

QUESTIONS:

How do you harmonize the different accounts of the resurrection?

Tell what you know about Mary Magdalene.

Who had been taking care of the body of Jesus in the tomb? How does God use angels in connection with His people?

Tell about the different appearances of Jesus after His resurrection.

What does the resurrection of Jesus mean to us? To the world?

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

April 28—Psa. 19:7-14; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.

Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

* * *

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them,

And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

GOLDEN TEXT: *Oh how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.—Psalm 119:97.*



DIVINE law may be defined as God's way of carrying on the affairs of the universe. Absence of law means confusion and chaos. If one were to wake up some morning and find himself in a land that had no law of any kind, he could not accomplish anything. If the laws of nature were not reliable, there could be no building of houses, no manufacturing, no assur-

ance of results that accrue from work. But man has always been able to count on the unfailing operations of natural law.

God's laws are all designed for good. The great moral law that God gave to the Jews was chiefly characterized by the quality of justice. It enjoined upon the people that they were to respect the rights of their neighbors by doing them no wrong. They were not to bear false witness against another, not to steal, not to covet, not to kill.

This law was binding and constant. It did not mean that they were to kill some times, but not other times; to steal one day, but not the next. The people's sense of what was right should have kept them in the way of moral rectitude, but the depravity of the human heart is great, and the Lord saw that it was necessary to give them formulated law.

The Prophet David prays that he may be kept from secret faults. If we have wrong thoughts which are unexpressed, none may know them but ourselves. They are secret. It may take the Word of God to reveal them even to us in all their unsightly character. It is the tendency for thoughts to lead to actions. If the thoughts are good, the actions usually will correspond.

"Presumptuous sins" would be sins of commission that would manifest the evil character of the thoughts. King Saul committed such a sin when he offered sacrifice without waiting for God's prophet, Samuel, to come and perform that service. David does not explain what he means by "the great transgression"; but he may have meant wilfully taking the law of God into our own hands, completely disregarding the divine will. To sin wilfully, after having come to a knowledge of the truth, is indeed a "great transgression."

In the King James Version of the Bible we find the statement, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." This translation is not entirely correct. The word "scripture" means "writing," and of course *all* writing is not given by divine inspiration. The Revised Version says,

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching." This statement is absolutely true. There is great sanctifying power in the Word of God. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth." The Master said, "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The great prophecies of the Bible point out to us the signs of the times in which we live. The historical portions of the Bible show us how others in times past had to fight the "good fight of faith," and these narratives encourage us to do likewise. The promises of the Bible give us comfort in times of trouble, and joy in the thought that the Lord is directing the course of our lives. The Bible becomes more precious to every Christian as the years go by, for such know that the great Plan of the Ages is contained in its pages. It becomes to us a great and wonderful "glass" wherein we may behold "the glory of the Lord."

QUESTIONS:

How would you define God's law?

What does David mean by "the fear of the Lord"? and how does it endure for ever?

Define "secret faults," "presumptuous sins," and "the great transgression."

How do the sacred Scriptures make one wise unto salvation?

Explain how divinely inspired Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

::

SIN, REPENTANCE AND FAITH

May 5—Luke 15:11-24.

And He said, A certain man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And He divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there

arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger:

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry:

For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

GOLDEN TEXT: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—1 John 1:9.*



IN THIS beautiful story of the Prodigal Son we find a suggestion of the "good news" of God's plan contained elsewhere in the Bible. Here in a nutshell is the wonderful narrative of sin and its terrible results, and of the love and compassion of God. The young man of the story had left a good home. He had a good father and had enjoyed an abundance of the good things of life. But he desired experience and a knowledge of life that lay outside of his prescribed bounds. So he asked for an advancement of his share of the property that would naturally

come to him some time, and this was bestowed. Then the boy deliberately took leave of his father's house.

The Prodigal Son went away into a far country. He got in with companions and began to squander his money. He found it easy to go down hill. Ere long he had nothing. A famine arose and he was in dire want. Then it was that he hired out to a citizen of the country who sent him into his fields to feed swine. Here, in due time, the boy "came to himself." He decided that he had had enough of that kind of life, and that he would go home and make a confession of complete failure. He did just that. Then it was that love stepped in and played its important role. Full reconciliation was effected, and the poor wayworn youth is restored to happiness once more.

When Jesus was on earth some of the nation of Israel, as publicans and sinners, wandered into the country of sin. With these the Doctors of the Law and the Pharisees would have nothing to do, regarding them as outcasts. But some of these recognized their own unworthiness, and cried to God for mercy. In reference to this fact Jesus set forth a parable in which a publican is pictured as saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Matthew was of the publican class, and he became a follower of the Master. God was ready and willing to receive these to His favor, for He said, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." Then again we read, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Speaking to the chief priests and elders of the people, Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you." (Matt. 21:31.) Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." God hears the cry of the humble, contrite heart. "He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Said the Master, "Joy shall

be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

In a general sense the parable of the Prodigal Son may apply to the entire human race. All men wandered into a "far country," away from God, and have "wasted their substance with riotous living." After some six thousand years of experience with sin the world today is in a very bad state. All kinds of schemes and remedies now are proposed for its amelioration; but it is still engaged in feeding swine. There is no hope in human power or wisdom. The only hope lies in the thought of returning home. The restoration of man by means of the coming divine Kingdom is the one and only panacea for all human woes.

QUESTIONS:

Why did the Prodigal Son desire to leave home? Why did the father not try to prevent his doing so?

What caused the young man to go downhill till he lost all his goods?

What did Jesus mean by "a mighty famine in the land"?

What is meant by the expression, "when he came to himself"?

What is the meaning of the robe, the shoes and the ring with which the returned prodigal was adorned?

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Talking Things Over



"The Spirit of a Sound Mind"



ONE of Satan's chief methods of attack is that of inducing the Lord's people to take extreme positions in respect to important issues with which they may be confronted. This fact is vividly impressed upon our minds through correspondence with the friends in various parts of the country. The Apostle Peter describes the tactics of our adversary as being like those of a "roaring lion." The roar of the lion produces fear and nervousness on the part of the intended victim, and when a Christian is under the influence of fear he usually does the wrong thing.

What Satan is most interested in doing is to take the truth away from God's people and thereby destroy their spiritual life; and his "roars" are reverberating throughout the earth today as never before in his effort to becloud the real issue before Christians and to cause a state of spiritual unbalance among the brethren. By this "roaring" he is endeavoring to frighten the friends into taking extreme positions of one kind or another, supposing that in such a retreat they will be safe. But the very extremity of the position into which one may be frightened invariably brings doubts or suspicions in regard to those who do not fully agree with them; and almost always this leads to judging and harsh condemnation of others—thereby evidencing a lack of true Christian love. It is just such a condition of heart and mind as this that is most pleasing to our great adversary.

Two intensely interesting, yet pathetic, letters are now before us. In one, the writer tells us that he would not think of reading anything that was not personally written by our dear Brother Russell; and he gives the impression that those who do not follow the same course as he does cannot be wholly faithful to the Lord. In the other letter we are told that unless we have something new and different from that which Brother Russell taught, then our efforts to proclaim the glad tidings and to serve the brethren are not really worthwhile in his estimation.

Now the writers of both of these letters are undoubtedly equally sincere, but it is apparent that Satan's "roars" have frightened them into these extreme positions—for self protection. The one brother sees the regrettable departure from the truth on the part of many, and feels that his only safety is in retiring into a sectarian corner and becoming a "Russellite." The other brother, seeing the unscriptural attitude of sectarianism on the part of many, takes the other extreme, and, failing to see the difference be-

tween the truth and the improper use that is made of it, belittles the importance of the harvest message by which the Lord so greatly encouraged His people in this end of the age.

Surely the Lord doesn't want us to become narrow sectarians, nor mere followers of men; as many have mistakenly done down through the age. Neither would He be pleased to have us discount the importance of present truth that He provided for us, and to flippantly refer to its fundamental doctrines as mere "milk of the Word," as many are now doing.

One outstanding fact in the ministry of our dear Brother Russell was that he urged the brethren to "prove all things" by the inspired Word of God. Those who faithfully followed this wise counsel accepted the truth as God's truth, and are not now men-worshippers when they insist on adhering consistently to that which they have learned.

If our faith is really grounded in the Word of God we will not be afraid of error, nor will we be restlessly searching for something "new." It was the "itching ears" of many of the early Christians that made possible the great falling away from the true faith of the gospel. Frankly, we have no new light to advance, and are still rejoicing in the rich spiritual feast the Lord has so bountifully provided for us as "meat in due season." It seems to us that there is no need for a restless craving for "new light." If the tremendous fact of the Lord's presence; the nearness of His Kingdom, and the actual blessing of all the families of the earth with life and happiness; and an accurate understanding of all the great fundamental doctrines of the Bible, including the truth of what it means to be a Christian: doesn't satisfy our longings, then there must be something the matter with our longings.

True Christian progress is that of our own heart development in Christlikeness. It was to aid us in this development that God gave us the truth. Is the simple truth of the gospel having a proper effect in our lives? This is much more important to us than finding some new, and perhaps weird, interpretation of certain portions of the Bible. Are we truly rooted and grounded in the things we *have* learned?

It is a noteworthy fact, that almost without exception, the "new light" that has been advanced from various sources in recent years can be traced back to one quarter or another of mystic Babylon.. In Satan's original onslaught against the simple truth of the gospel he used two effective methods of attack. One was that of appealing to the "intellectuals" by cunning and involved "explanations" of various parts

of the Bible and its doctrines,, insisting that those who could not understand these "cunningly devised fables" lacked spiritual discernment, and were not able to assimilate the "strong meat" of the Word.

The other method of attack was that of appealing to the individual through the emotions. In this case "feelings" took the place of reason, and those that couldn't thus "tune in with God"—as modern philosophers now express it—were considered to be on a much lower plane of spiritual development.

Both of these seductive influences are being brought to bear upon the brethren today, from almost innumerable sources, with the result that the precious harvest truth with which the Lord is feeding His people, is by many being labeled as mere "milk." We believe that this is a gross deception, and if yielded to will sooner or later lead away from the truth and all the way back into the errors of Babylon.

It seems to us that the only safe course for the Christian today is to seek the "spirit of a sound mind," not allowing Satan to lead him into these extreme positions. We should not be opposed to real progress, yet to leave our minds open on matters that we should long ago have settled as being the truth of the Bible is liable to lead to disastrous results. We do not want to become sufferers from spiritual colds because of leaving the door of our minds open, thus permitting the winds of false doctrine to chill our sense of true spiritual discernment; although we should be ready to rejoice in any additional untoldment of prophecy that the progress of events makes possible.

But no matter how loyal to the truth we may be, it is a mistake to become extremists in the other direction, and to withdraw from all association with the brethren, thinking thereby to "stay in the truth." Those of us who still cherish the harvest truth should be awake to every opportunity to help those who are being subjected to baneful influences of error. We cannot help others by retiring into a sectarian seclusion by which contact with the household of faith is almost entirely cut off. Let us be valiant soldiers of the cross, fighting the "good fight of faith" in love and in the power of the Word of God. Let us be active in holding up the standard of truth so that others may see it and be blessed by it.

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The Morning Star of the Resurrection

(Continued from page 25)

lose their foliage and their beauty; but it is wonderful how soon the sun will revive them and restore their verdure.

"Just so it is in regard to Christians. If deprived of the light of His face, as it shines through the truth, how sad and forlorn they appear; no indications of spiritual life, no fruits of grace, no beauty, no attraction. The secret is that they have been living down in the cellar, away from the bright sun and in an unhealthy atmosphere.

Keep in the Sunlight of Present Truth

Poor, drooping soul, hast thou been down in that gloomy place, away from Christ and the truth, and hast thy spiritual vigor died out? Now, stripped of thy sweet comfort art thou despondent, saying, "I fear there is no hope for me"? Be not discouraged. Come right up into the sunlight, and the pure air of love and truth. The truth is the same today as when you first heard and accepted it; and through it Christ will again shine into your heart!

Let us fall at the Master's feet, as Mary did, and acknowledge Him as "Master." Let us ask Him to take these two poor hands of ours and make them strong to do deeds of love for Him. Let us ask Him to send our feet tripping along the way of life rejoicing in His service. Let us beseech Him to take our hearts and fill them with the love that "hopeth all things, believeth all things, and never faileth." Let us tell Him that we want to do better than in the past, that we want to prove more worthy of the truth. Tell Him that we want to serve the interests of His truth and the interests of His people; which privilege we may have "while it is called today, ere the night cometh when no man can work." Then He will be gracious unto us and take us by the hand and lead us on to those victories and to that ineffable outcome which His power alone can accomplish in our lives.

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To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach

That the church is the "Temple of the living God"—peculiarly "His workmanship"; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief corner stone of His Temple through which, when finished, God's blessing shall come "to all people," and they find access to Him—1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29,

That meantime the chiseling, shaping and polishing, of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin, progresses; and when the last of these "living stones," elect and precious, shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the First Resurrection; and the Temple shall be filled with His glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium—Rev 15:5-8.

That the basis of hope for the church and the world, lies in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for *every man*," "a ransom for all," and will be the true light which "*lighteth every man that cometh into the world*," in due time."—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

That the hope of the church is that she may be like her Lord see Him as He is, be "partaker of the divine nature," and share His glory as His joint-heir—1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4.

That the present mission of the church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6; 20:6.

That the hope for the world lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to *all* by Christ's Millennial Kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and His glorified church—when all the wilfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-21; Isa. 35.