

## **A REASON FOR THE HOPE.**

### **DIALOGUE.**

Questioner. – It is some time since we have had a talk together Brother W., and I have called now to make a few inquiries. I want you to give me in a few words, your reasons for believing that Jesus is now present.

Watchman. – I am glad to talk with you upon so interesting a subject, and shall try to answer your queries. You are aware, I presume, that I and all the writers for the WATCH TOWER believe that Jesus has come the second time, and is now present in the world, and for this reason our paper is also called the "Herald of Christ's Presence." If I understand your question, you want me to refresh your memory briefly on the reasons for so believing.

Q. – Exactly. Of course all christians believe that Jesus has been spiritually present with his church during all the Gospel Age, as He said: "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world" [age]. In what sense is he now present, as He has not always been, and what are the proofs?

W. – Let us for a moment then drop the idea of time and of His now being present, and see how He will be in His day, whether that day be now or a thousand years hence. First, come back 2,000 years to the time when Jesus "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (when he was in glory.) See Him lay aside the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and being rich for our sakes become poor. See Him take upon Him the form of a servant for the suffering of death." Notice now the difference between bodily form of God and the form of servants; They are totally different and He must leave the one to take the other.

Secondly, notice why He took the form of a servant. We read – for the suffering of death. God is a spirit, has a spiritual body, and could not die under any circumstances, for a spiritual body is an immortal, [undying] body, (1 Cor. 15). Man being a sinner, condemned to death and unable to release himself, Jesus became his ransom, giving His life a ransom for ours. We were redeemed from death, or justified to life, "by the precious blood [death] of Christ." We see then that Jesus laid aside the form of God and took the form of man, so that He might pay our penalty for us – die for us.

Thirdly, notice that when he had died "even the death of the cross" the purpose or object in taking our form was accomplished, and there is no reason why He should have the form of a servant since He died. And we claim that He is not now a man glorified, that He has not been a man since "the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all." I claim that these two natures – divine and human – are separate and distinct, that as He left the divine to take the human, so also He left the human when He resumed the divine.

Jesus was put to death in the flesh but quickened [made alive] by the spirit. Let us look at this expression, "made alive by the spirit." To what kind of life? Was it the life of the flesh that was quickened? No, it was spiritual life. Listen; Jesus tells Nicodemus "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, (Jesus as a man was born of a woman and was flesh, thus taking human nature,) and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Jesus at His resurrection was "born of the spirit," therefore was not flesh but spirit. He is called "the first-born from the dead," and was "quickened by the spirit."

So it will be with us; we shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness. Not in the likeness of men which He took for a purpose. We have that likeness now, but when "we see Him as He is we shall be like Him" and be satisfied – be like unto Christ's glorious body.

"Nor doth it yet appear,  
How great we shall be made,  
But when we see Him as He is,  
We shall be like our Head."

Q. – I see then that you understand the text, "Put to death in the flesh, quickened by the spirit" as being of the same import as the one which speaking of the death and resurrection of the Saints, says: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body;" and "as we now bear the image of the earthly, we shall then bear the image of the heavenly."

W. – Yes, very true, but let us not lose our subject. It is Jesus and His new condition after His resurrection, not what we shall be, although the inferential reasoning that our vile and earthly bodies must undergo so great a change, to be like His heavenly, or glorious body before we can see Him as he is, is the very best kind of proof that He is not and has not been, since His resurrection, like us, that is, in the form of a servant.

Q. – If Jesus after his resurrection was a glorious spiritual body, how was it that the disciples never saw his glorious body? Why did he appear to them as he had done before his death?

W. – If Jesus had appeared to them and shown his glory, they would probably have been so alarmed as to be unable to receive instructions; besides if they had gone forth saying the Lord arose and appeared to us in glory, they would have been accused of telling ghost stories. Remember that the object of Jesus appearing to them was to convince them that "He who was dead is alive forevermore;" that they might go forth as "witnesses." Being a spiritual body it was simply a question of expediency – which way could he best appear to them, i.e., in which way would his object in appearing be best accomplished? He could appear as a "flame of fire," as the angel of the Lord (also a spiritual body) had appeared to Moses "in the

burning bush." Thus Jesus might have appeared to, and talked with the disciples, or he might have appeared in glory as the angel did to Daniel, or as he afterward did to John and to Saul of Tarsus.

If he had so appeared, they would doubtless also have had "great fear and quaking" and would have fallen to the ground before Him and "become as dead men;" or he could do, as angels had done and as he had done with Abraham (Gen. 18) when he appeared as a man. This last he saw to be the best way and he did appear as a man. But notice he did not appear to them as he had done before His death. First he appeared to Mary as the gardener and she "saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus." "After that he appeared in another form unto two of them" as they went to Emmaus (Luke 24:13). They knew not that it was Jesus, until he revealed Himself in breaking of bread. Then he vanished from their sight.

Again, some had given up all hope of being any longer fishers of men and had gone again to their nets. They had toiled all night and caught nothing. In the morning Jesus is on the shore within speaking distance but they "knew not that it was Jesus." It was another form. He works a miracle giving them a boat full of fish in a moment; John, the loving disciple, remembers the feeding of the 3,000 and 5,000, the strange days in which they were living, and that Jesus had appeared to them already. He seems at once to discern who gave the draught of fishes; and said: "It is the Lord." He recognized him not by the natural eye but by the eye of faith, and when they were come to shore "none of them dare ask him who art thou, knowing (feeling sure from the miracle for they saw not the print of the nails) that it was the Lord" (John 21). Thus did Jesus appear to his disciples at different times, to make of them witnesses of His resurrection, seemingly he was present but unseen during most of those forty days appearing in all, perhaps, not more than seven times. (John 20:26, 21:14.)

Q. – What object could there be for His appearing in so many different forms?

W. – I presume it was to guard against their idea that he was a fleshly body, by appearing in various forms and in miraculous ways, coming into their midst, the doors being shut, and vanishing from their sight. He not only showed that He had undergone a change since death, but He illustrated his own teaching to Nicodemus, that every one born of the spirit (that born of the spirit is spirit) can go and come like the wind. "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is everyone that is born of the spirit." So did Jesus go and come. "But some doubted" – some wanted to thrust their hand into his side and put their fingers into the print of the nails; and Jesus thus appears, whether it was the same body that had been crucified, or one like it, I know not nor does it make any difference, in any case it was not his body, for he had been "quickenened of the spirit" – a spiritual body – "sown a natural body raised a spiritual body," and none of the various forms or bodies in which he appeared were His body. They were only veils of the flesh which hid or covered the glorious spiritual body, just as angels had often used the same human form to veil themselves when appearing to mortals.

Q. – One point which seems to confuse some is, that Jesus ate and drank with the disciples and said, "Handle me, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." How do you explain this?

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W. – It does not need to be explained away. Jesus affirms just what we have claimed, viz: That the body they saw and handled and which ate with them was not his **[R123 : page 2]** spiritual body for the spirit hath not flesh and bones. Look back to the time when the Lord and two angels appeared to Abraham. (Gen. 18.) Jesus had not then left "the form of God" and taken the form of a servant. He was a spiritual body then, and it had not flesh and bones but he then used

the human form as a veil. He ate and drank and talked and could have said to Abraham, "Handle me, this body which you see is 'flesh and bones.'"

**"THIS SAME JESUS SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER."**

Q. – Now with regard to Jesus' second coming, does not this text (Acts 1:11) teach that when he comes he will be seen by his watching disciples? Will he not appear in the flesh to prove that he has come?

W. – No, I think not. There is not a word about the disciple or any one else seeing him. It merely tells us that he will come as he went. How did he go? With trumpet blasts and shouts or wails of the people of earth? No, but quietly and unseen of the world. As he said before he died, "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more." And the world did not see him after his resurrection. During the forty days he was seldom seen, showing himself only to his disciples. Did he go mid pealing thunder, flashing lightnings and rending rocks? No, quietly, unknown of the world, he "ascended up where he was before." Whenever he comes he will come in the same quiet manner, unknown of the world. We know from other scriptures that his church will not be in darkness.

Q. – I see that there is nothing in this text to teach that when he should come he would be seen, but does it not seem reasonable to suppose that he will so appear?

W. – There is no question as to his ability to appear now as then; but before calling your attention to scriptures which seem to teach that he will be present unseen, let me remind you that while it was necessary that he should then appear to make his disciples eye-witnesses of his resurrection, no such necessity now exists. He comes now not to call out a people to believe on Him, but to glorify

a people already separated by his call then issued; to glorify his virgin church and make her His bride; "to make up His jewels."

Thomas, who doubted and must see the print of the nails before he could believe, lived not in the Gospel Age but in the Jewish, not among spiritual children of God, but in the fleshly house (until Pentecost). He was used to seeing things after the flesh, and had not his eye of faith yet opened. Yet in Jesus' words to Thomas it would seem that he had expected even more from him. Jesus said to him: "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; happy those who see not and believe." (John 21:29. Diaglott).

Would we consider it expedient for an earthly teacher after training his class up, up, up to the higher branches of learning to complete their studies by giving them a three months course in the alphabet. But this would be no more unreasonable than to suppose that our education in the school of faith, and growth in grace and knowledge under our Master's instructions, should be finished by illustrations in the flesh; "Having begun in the Spirit are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3.) "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

Q. – It does not seem as though much benefit would result to us by merely gratifying our desire to see him, and I remember he said before going: "It is expedient for you that I go away." "Unless I go away the comforter cannot come." Would this involve the thought that when he comes again the comforter will be withdrawn?

W. – No, the reason the comfort of the Holy Spirit could not come was, that all were sinners and God could not recognize and comfort sinners. They must first be justified by Jesus' death. Afterward being justified by his death, we have peace with God. We become His children, and to such, He sends the spirit of adoption whereby we cry "Abba, (our) Father." Before this spirit could be sent to any, Jesus must not only die, but He must also ascend to the

Father's presence and present the evidence of our purchase as typified by the High Priest's going into the holy place and sprinkling the blood. The coming out of the holy place (heaven) by our high priest does not undo the work of justification. We are still justified, and shall be forever; still sons and shall always be such, and consequently always possess the spirit as a comforter. It is the spirit of Christ. "Let the Spirit of Christ dwell in you richly."

Q. – If I understand you aright your view is, that though it was expedient that Jesus go from the world and present the proof of our ransom before the Holy Spirit, could come to us, yet the continuance of the Spirit's comforting presence is not dependent on his absence, for once given, it will never be withdrawn from those who abide in Him.

W. – Yes, but let us not leave our subject: We seem to agree then that so far as we can see, there would be nothing to be gained by Jesus' appearing in the flesh to us at his second coming. But another point, if he should so appear, what satisfaction would or could it give any of us. It would not be Him we would see, for He is not flesh and if Jesus should so appear to me I should pray as did Moses, – Lord that I might see thy Glory – that I might see thee really, not an appearance, but thyself, thy glorious body, as Saul and John saw thee, as thou art. Oh no, I never could be satisfied with seeing an appearance of Jesus; I want to see Him as he is. "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness," not by His appearing in our likeness.

Remember too that he tells us about the time of his presence, before we "are made like Him." He says the world will not know of it but will go on eating, planting, building, marrying, etc., and "know not" of his (parousia) presence. Matt. 24:37-39. Luke 17:26.

Not only does Jesus intimate that his coming and presence will be unknown to the world, but that many of His servants will be so



asleep, and overcharged with the things of this world, that the day of the Lord (His presence) will be upon them as a snare, and some will "begin to smite their fellow servants, saying: My Lord (the Bridegroom) delayeth His coming" while the ones smitten evidently are taking the opposite ground, viz: that the bridegroom does not delay, but is present. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he (ako) has come shall find, giving meat in due season to the household of faith. (The meat due when the Lord has come, would unquestionably be, the evidences or proofs of His presence.) Evidently the presence is one not recognized by the natural eye, but by the eye of faith, else there could be no disagreement between the servants as to the fact of His presence. (Matt. 24:44-49.)

Jesus tells us to beware, that false teachers will arise saying, "Lo, here or lo, there, believe them not, I will not come in any such seen manner, but as the "lightning" which cannot be seen (electricity, unseen, can go six to ten times around the earth in one second,) so shall the Son of Man be in His day." (Luke 17:24.) As the lightning when present frequently sends forth light which may be seen by those awake, so Jesus intimates that in His days of presence light will shine.

Q. – That seems a beautiful thought taken in connection with the wonderful amount of spiritual light and truth which has shone on us and to us during the very years you claim as being the days of the presence of the Son of Man – since 1875.

W. – Now we will glance hurriedly at some of the evidences that we are now in "the days of the Son of Man." I will not attempt to prove the points of time. You can get them in full detail in Bro. Paton's new book, "Day Dawn," which you should by all means read.

Q. – I have followed you so far, and can agree with your position fully, but when you come to prove that Jesus is now present

and ask me to believe it without any sight evidence, I am afraid I have not strong enough faith to believe it.

W. – I have not asked you to believe it, Bro. Q. I never ask any one to believe, I simply give the evidence; If it is as strong to them as to me they cannot help believing it. Now, you seem to think that if we had a little sight it would help matters. Let me remind you of a word from Peter. He was writing of things he had seen when on the mount of transfiguration; but when he has finished the narrative of the things seen, he adds: "But we have a more sure word of Prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." (2 Pet. 1:19.) And so I think now, the prophecies are more convincing to me than if Jesus were to appear as a man before me. Nay, more, I should say to such an one Begone, impostor; My Lord left word that if any so appear I was to "believe it not," and "go not after them nor follow them," "for as the lightning (not as a man – so shall the Son of Man be in His day."

The "Jubilee Cycles" prove that the great jubilee or "times of restitution of all things" was due to begin in 1875. It is a clear, strong argument based upon both "the Law" and the Prophets; No one has ever yet been able to overthrow it. I believe that no one can overthrow it, nor even show a weak point in it, because it is of the Lord. Now, remembering this, turn to Acts 3:21, and hear Peter under inspiration, say: The heavens shall receive Jesus until the times of restitution of all things. Now, is it not clear that if the restitution times began in 1875, the heavens do no longer retain Him. He is here present?

Q. – That is strong, surely; but, are there any evidences that the restitution work began in 1875? **[R124 : page 2]**

W. – Yes; we understand that before the human family are restored or even begin to be blessed the present kingdoms of earth which now bind and oppress mankind will all be overturned and that

the kingdom of God will assume control and that the blessing and restitution come through the new kingdom. The work of demolishing human empire is beginning. The power that will overthrow them is now at work. The people are already organizing their forces under the name of Communists, Socialists, Nihilists, etc. True, there have always been Communists, but their work of organization and activity are within recent years, in 1875-6, scarcely any one knew the meaning of communist and nihilist. Now they are household words.

Another prophetic proof is that of the 1335 days (yrs.) of Daniel to the time Jesus was due to be present – "the harvest," or end of this age – during which harvest time, Daniel was told that he should stand in his lot, or be resurrected with his class, the Prophets. The angel adds by way of comment: "Blessed is he that waiteth (remains alive) until (the 1335 days) 1874. Those days surely end there, but what blessing did any of us who live realize? We are blessed by the "Bright shining of the present one." (The literal rendering of last clause of 2 Thes. 2:8.) Jesus as the lightning is present, unseen, and is causing bright light of truth to shine into our minds. Wonderfully bright, and sweet, and precious, indeed, has been this light, on the presence of the Son of Man, separating between wheat and tares and preparing his chaste Virgin for glory. He is making up His jewels, finishing the work by selecting those who are alive and remain, that we may be caught up, together with those who sleep in him, to meet him in the air.

As Jesus said to His disciples at the first advent, "Blessed are your eyes and your ears, etc., for I say unto you many prophets and righteous persons have desired to see these things and have not seen them" – So the angel said to Daniel – Blessed are they who will live to 1874, for they shall see, (not with natural eye, but by faith) and hear (not with natural ear but through the sure word of Prophecy)

and know (but not by worldly wisdom to which these things are hid, but by the Spirit of God freely given unto us "that we might know" – (1 Cor. 2:11 and 12,) see, hear and know things which in times past God had not made known. Yes, truly blessed, we have found it

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"To be living is sublime."

Again we have found the word to teach that the Jewish age was given as a pattern, or shadow, or illustration of the Gospel age, and we have found it so. The latter being on a higher plane than the former, but otherwise its exact counterpart. It was 1840½ years from the beginning of the age to their harvest when Jesus was present in the flesh to that fleshly house. And it was 1841½ years from the commencement of our Gospel age at Pentecost (A.D. 33,) to the commencement of our "harvest" in the autumn of 1874, when our "sure word of prophecy" announces him as again present, but now on the higher plane, a spiritual body unseen, reaping, or harvesting the spiritual house. To the fleshly house the harvest work was on the fleshly plane and the chief reaper, Jesus and the other reapers, His disciples, were seen. Now there are under reapers, also, but they are "the angels," [Matt. 13] also spiritual bodies unseen, and so with the afterpart \* **[R124 : page 7]** of the harvest. As Jesus gave up the Nominal church at the close of his 3½ years ministry because they "knew not the time of their visitation, so here too, at the parallel point of time, 1878, we believe the Nominal church to have been given up, and the "spewing out of His mouth" [Rev. 3] to have begun. As the Jewish house was shown some special favor for 3½ years, the latter half of their covenant week so we expect some favor to continue with the Nominal Gospel church for 3½ years, or until the autumn of 1881. As with the Jew, a period of 33 years of trouble followed these 7 years of favor, so we understand there will be upon christendom, so called, a period of 33 years of trouble – making with

the preceding 7 years the 40 years of trouble or "Day of wrath" ending with the times of the Gentiles in 1914, when the kingdom of God [soon to be set up or exalted to power] will have broken in pieces and consumed all earthly kingdoms.

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Q. – Wonderfully clear all this seems and how connected; my loss has been in not having a thorough knowledge of these time evidences of which you speak. I must study them up and make them my own that, as Paul says my faith may not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God – His word. (1 Cor. 2:5.)

W. – I am glad to hear you say so. In no other way can you fully make them yours, or have in them such a basis for faith. Remember as Peter says the word is to be a "lamp to our feet," "a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts." It is evident then that no period of walking by sight comes to us here. We shall need the lamp all the way for "we walk by faith, not by sight."

Q. – It speaks elsewhere of the "Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in his wings." When sunrise has come we do not need lamps. Does not this seem to indicate that we shall reach a condition whether by sight or not, where there will be no need of the light of "the lamp?" Does not this involve the thought of faith giving place to sight?

W. – I think not. It is not we but the Jews who see the "Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings;" and they are told in connection with it to "remember the Law of Moses." (Malachi 4.) On the contrary, we, with Jesus our head will constitute that "Sun of

Righteousness," as Jesus said (Matt. 13:43) speaking of the "harvest" or end of this age, when the wheat of the church should be completely separated from the tares of the same: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father."

It is the same thought that is expressed in Rev. 21:24 of the New Jerusalem shining and the Nations walking in the light of it. Yes it is a grand thought, that the day so long expected is near at hand. Not only natural Israel but as Paul says: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now," and "waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God." (Rom. 8:19 and 22.) All are now passing through a dark night of experience with sin, woe and death; all creation is sick; they groan in pain and soon they shall be delivered. Soon the "Great Physician" – "the Elijah" – "The Sun of righteousness (the Christ, head and body) shall arise with healing in his wings."

"Now the world is full of suffering,  
Sounds of woe fall on my ears,  
Sights of wretchedness and sorrow  
Fill my eyes with pitying tears.  
'Tis the earth's dark night of weeping,  
Wrong and evil triumph now,  
I can wait, for just before me  
Beams the morning's roseate glow."

Yes, Bro. Q., "when He shall appear we shall appear with Him in glory." We will not be here when the "Sun" rises. True we are now in the dawn, but there is quite a while between first dawn of day and the Sun rise, and that is what Peter means. "We have a more sure word of prophecy – as a light in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts." Jesus is the day star – "The bright and morning star." He must come first to us before we shine with Him as "the sun." And, dear Bro. Q., do you not see that this very thing is now being fulfilled? To all who recognize Jesus as

present it is a fountain of joy to realize in Him the sure forerunner of our own glory with Him, and the great millennial day of restitution for the world.

Q. – I must confess Bro. W., that your hope is the grandest to which mortals could aspire.

W. – We could not aspire to such things. God has crowded these exceeding great and precious promises upon us; and while I urge that if interested in this great hope, you should make it yours, by personal investigation of the proofs, and recommend to you the "Day Dawn," yet let me suggest that the very object of our heavenly Father in giving us these exceeding great and precious promises, is "that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4.) If we have put on Christ, let us walk in Him, and walk not after our own will, but according to the will of our head, Christ Jesus.

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