

WHEN AND HOW WILL CHRIST COME?

We have just read, in a contemporary which is seen by many of our readers, an article entitled "Christ, and Anti-Christ," in which the writer seeks to prove that Jesus, at his second advent, will come in the flesh. The proof of his position he bases mainly on, 1 John 4:2,3. He quotes the verses thus: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ erkomai [cometh] in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ erkomai in the flesh is not of God." "For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Anti-Christ." 1 John 4:2,3, and 2 John 7.

He continues: "The rendering of erkomai, as it is given by the translators in these special texts, was merely because of the theology of these Episcopalian ministers. It is the word invariably used [mark!] by the apostles when speaking of his future coming." Then follows a list of texts, in which he asserts erkomai occurs, putting them all in the future tense.

We are obliged to say that he has made a very serious mistake, and one calculated to lead into error any one not familiar with the Greek of the New Testament. Yet it is but just to say that it was a mistake easily made. Not being familiar with the original, he evidently depended upon a Greek Concordance in making his quotations. The error probably crept in this way. In such Concordances, each word is given usually in its generic [general] form only, without reference to the changes it undergoes in passing through the various grammatical forms which distinguish its moods, tenses, &c. Thus, under the general head of "Erkomai" [come] he would find references to passages containing such combinations as

these: have come, is come, will come, may come, also cometh, came, &c.

If unfamiliar with the Greek forms and without an examination of the Greek text he would be totally unable to distinguish between the tenses.

Looking in the concordance then under "Erkomai" he finds references to some passages which he knows speak of Christ's second advent. If he fails to look further he may conclude that "it is the word invariably used when speaking of his future coming." Of course a more thorough search would soon have revealed the error. Having thus reached a conclusion – unfortunately a wrong one – it is apparent that on finding other texts which his theory required to be in the future tense – that were translated in the past – he would at once jump to the conclusion that they were mistranslated.

This he has done. Both in his proof texts, and in his list which he has given to support his translation of the proof texts, he has been thus deceived. His argument briefly but fairly stated is this. "Erkomai meaning cometh," is the word invariably used by the apostles when speaking of his (Christ's) future coming." Proof: a list of texts referring to the future in which he asserts erkomai occurs. Now says he (we are using **[R149 : page 6]** our own words for brevity's sake.) Erkomai is the word used in 1 Jno. 4:2-3, in which it speaks of a coming of Christ in the flesh, therefore the coming in the flesh spoken of, is in the future, at his second advent; and all who deny this are by the same authority called Anti-Christ – those who are in harmony with the WATCH TOWER particularly included.

Well, we can pardon his allusion to the WATCH TOWER, and even excuse his mistake, but we cannot pass it by unnoticed; and now let us give briefly the facts in the case – First then: In the texts he has quoted the words in dispute are not confined to the future, but

are in various tenses. Secondly: The word *erkomai* (on which he hangs the whole argument) does not occur in any of them.

We will now quote the texts, and give the original words as they really appear:

"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come [eleeluthota] in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ is not of God." 1 John 4:2,3. The word does not occur in third verse "This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come [eleusetai] in like manner," &c. Acts 1:11. "When the Son of Man shall come [elthee] in his glory," &c. Matt. 25:31. "Behold, the Bridegroom *erketai!*" [Word omitted in best authorities.] Matt. 25:6. "Behold, he cometh [erketai] with clouds." Rev. 1:7. "There shall come, [eleusantai] in the last days, scoffers." 2 Pet. 3:3. "Behold, the Lord cometh." [Eelthe – came; prophetic; like Isa. 9:6.] Jude 14. "Which is and which was, and which is to come." [Erkomenas.] Rev. 1:14.

A portion of an article from the WATCH TOWER on the latter part of Matt. 24, was rather sharply criticised in our contemporary's article, in which he also claimed to find *erkomai* again where it does not occur. The scripture reads thus: "Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." Brother Russell claimed, in WATCH TOWER, that the time spoken of was not at the instant of Christ's arrival, as generally believed, but after he has come. The Greek word here is *Elthon*, and it undoubtedly has this meaning. It signifies an arrival accomplished; a period after the coming, and during the presence of the Lord. It is a participle form of the word, and should be rendered "having come." We might quote a multitude of texts in which it occurs, but must be satisfied with a few. That we may not be charged with picking up scattered and stray texts, we

will take a few in succession as we found them at the beginning of the book. "The star which they saw in the east, went before them, till, having come (elthon), it stood over where the young child was." Matt. 2:9. Notice, the star had been going before them, but at the period covered by elthon, it had ceased to go. Its arrival was accomplished: it stood.

"And when Jesus was come (elthon) into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever." 8:14.

Tell us, was not Jesus PRESENT? We do not know how long he was in the house till he saw the sick one, but we know that he had arrived, whether she knew it or not. His coming had been accomplished. He was present.

"And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels," &c. 9:23. We might read, "And Jesus, having come into the ruler's house," &c. He had arrived. "And when he was come (elthon) into his own country, he taught them in their synagogues," &c. 13:54. Surely he was present in this case. "Then he (the evil spirit) saith, "I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come (elthon), he findeth it empty, swept and garnished." 12:44. He had returned, and made search, and found this condition of things. "Blessed are those servants, whom, the Lord having come, 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." Luke 12:37.

Have we been astonished at the wonderful feast of love and truth that has been placed before us, without any effort on our part? Marvel not; the Master has come, and has made us sit down, and with his own blessed hands is serving us a bountiful supply. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. 3:20. Some have supposed that this text had an

application all the way down the gospel age. It cannot be so. It was given only to those living in the Laodicean period of the church. The spirit so directed. We know that we have been feasting with him. Could we do so until he had come in to us? Nay, more: Could we have heard the knock until he first had arrived, and stood, waiting and knocking for admittance?

And now, dear brethren and sisters, let us look very carefully at Matt. 24:44-51 in the light that has been given us, viz.: that our Lord has come.

"Therefore, be ye (ye brethren) also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man comes." This was fulfilled. It was months after Christ came (in Fall of '74) before the company realized it. "Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, HAVING COME (elthon), shall find so doing." Was there such a servant? Of course, we do not understand that it means one individual, but evidently a small company, best symbolized by a single servant. There was such a one, giving meat in due season, and receiving the blessing, for at least a period of years.

"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants," &c. Who is this? He is called that servant, i.e., one previously spoken of; one, then, who had been giving the household meat when the Lord came. What was that due meat? Surely, the time arguments proving **[R149 : page 7]** the presence of the Master. What then? Some part, large or small, of that little company must change their minds, and, taking back what they have said, declare, "My Lord delays his coming." Mark, there can be no delay until the time of arrival has passed. This one, therefore, must have known and taught the true time of the coming. Again, to fill the picture, he must begin

to smite the remainder of the company; and as he is in opposition, and proclaiming a delay, it is evident that they must be teaching that there is no delay, but that the truth of the past remains true.

Brothers, sisters, how else could this scripture be fulfilled? When, but at this time, could it take place? Truly, the King has come in to the guest chamber, and is scanning those who have been privileged to enter. Can we bear that searching eye, looking clear through and through? Lord, help us to examine ourselves in the light of present truth.

W. I. M.
