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New Light

The Watchtower Reprints, May 1881, p. 188

“If we were following *a man* undoubtedly it would be different with us; undoubtedly one human idea would contradict another and that which was light one or two or six years ago would be regarded as darkness now: But with God there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, and so it is with *truth*; any knowledge or light coming from God must be like its author. A new view of truth never can contradict a former truth. ‘*New light*’ never extinguishes older ‘*light*,’ but adds to it.”

The Watchtower, May 15, 1976, p. 298

“It is a serious matter to represent God and Christ in one way, then find that our understanding of the major teachings and fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures was in error, and then after that, to go back to the very doctrines that, by years of study, we had thoroughly determined to be in error. Christians cannot be vacillating--‘wishy-washy’--about such fundamental teachings. What confidence can one put in the sincerity or judgment of such persons?”

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The Watchtower, December 1, 1981, p. 26

“Truly, all the foregoing demonstrates that the pathway of Jehovah’s people has been and is like the bright light that gets ever brighter. (Prov. 4:18) As they came out of the gross darkness enveloping ‘Babylon the Great,’ the world empire of false religion, it was not to be expected that they would see all things immediately in their true light. (Rev. 17:5) The brilliance of revealed truth could have had a blinding, even a confusing, effect upon them spiritually. This could be compared to a person’s coming out of a totally dark room into bright sunlight. It would take time for the person’s eyes to adjust to the sudden glare of brilliant sunlight.”

The Watchtower, December 1, 1981, p. 27

"However, it may have seemed to some as though that path has not always gone straight forward. At times explanations given by Jehovah’s visible organization have shown adjustments, seemingly to previous points of view. But this has not actually been the case. This might be compared to what is known in navigational circles as a ‘tacking.’ By maneuvering the sails the sailors can cause a ship to go from right to left, back and forth, but all the time making progress toward their destination in spite of contrary winds.”

(done)

structed concerning the evil day, there is the intimation that it will be a time of special trial, and admonitions to held fast, &c., are given as in this 38th verse. During the last six or seven years, the Lord has been leading us, his people, in a very remarkable manner. As we look backward we can see that our pathway has been as "a shining light . . . shining more and more." It has been *progressive*, bringing us strength with "meat in due season." It has caused us to grow both in *grace and knowledge* and this growth, taken in connection with the fact that we are not obliged to look back and now call *darkness* what was then called by some of the brethren, "a great flood of light," is the very strongest grounds for confidence that the same Lord who then supplied us *light* from the word, is still providing of the same kind. We say then, "Cast not away your confidence" in our *Leader*, "the great Shepherd of the sheep."

If we were following a man undoubtedly it would be different with us; undoubtedly one human idea would contradict another and that which was light one or two or six years ago would be regarded as darkness now: But with God there is no variability, neither shadow of turning, and so it is with truth, any knowledge or light coming from God must be like its author. A new view of truth never can contradict a former truth. "New light" never extinguishes older "light," but adds to it. If you were lighting up a building containing seven gas jets you would not extinguish one every time you lighted another, but would add one light to another and they would be in harmony and thus give increase of light: So is it with the light of truth; the true increase is by adding to, not by substituting one for another.

Therefore, in mentioning grounds of our confidence that we are in the shining path under the leading of the Spirit, we mention first that the tendency of present truth is to produce the proper fruit of the spirit, of which love is the chief. The tendency of our growth in knowledge is to growth in grace. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he (Jesus) is pure." Our pathway has been one of increase of light in harmony with former light. Thus we have been led to increased confidence in our leader. Let us take

A GLANCE BACKWARD

at the steps of progress, and let all notice that the progress is not only forward but *upward*; i. e., the tendency is from the natural to the spiritual. We will look, not at any one person's experience, but at what serves to show the advance of the knowledge of truth for ten years past. Looking back to 1871, we see that many of our company were what are known as Second Adventists, and the light they held briefly stated, was that there would be a second advent of Jesus—that he would come to bless and immortalize the saints, to judge the world and to burn up the world and all the wicked. This, they claimed would occur in 1873, because the 6,000 years from the creation of Adam were complete then.

Well, 1873 came, the end of 6,000 years, and yet no *burning* of the world, &c. But prophecies were found which pointed positively to 1874 as the time when Jesus was due to be present, and the resurrection of Daniel was also due as proved by the ending of jubilee cycles and the 1335 days of Dan. xiii. The autumn of 1874, anxiously expected, finally came, but the earth rolled on as ever. "All things continued as they were from the beginning of creation." All their hearts were sad. They said, "Surely we have been in error—but where? Surely it is clearly taught that Jesus will come again; perhaps our calculation of time is at fault." Carefully they examined the chronology but it seemed faultless and positively declared that the 6,000 years ended in 1873. Then the prophetic arguments were carefully re-examined. Was an error found? No, they stood the test of all investigation and the jubilee argument and "1335 days" of Daniel could not possibly be prolonged beyond the fall of '74 or the spring of 1875 and these periods were both past.

Dark indeed seemed the outlook; all were discouraged. It had seemed as though the Lord had been leading in the past, and yet now all these things which had been thought light seemed to be proved darkness.

Just at this time Bro. Keith, (one of our contributors) was used of the Lord to throw another beam of *light* on the subject which brought order out of confusion, and caused all of the former "light" to shine with tenfold brightness. Brother K. had been reading carefully Matt. xxiv chapter, using the "Emphatic Diaglott," a new and very exact word for word translation of the New Testament; when he came to the 37th and 39th verses he was much surprised to find that it read as follows, viz.: "For as the days of Noah thus will be the presence of the son of man. For as in those days, those before the deluge they were eating and drinking, marrying and pledging in marriage till the day that Noah entered the

Ark, and understood not till the Deluge came and swept them all away; thus will be the presence of the Son of Man."

His surprise was, at finding that the Greek word *parousia* which signifies *presence*, had in our common version been improperly rendered *coming*, but the new rendering showed that it was not the act of coming that resembled the days of Noah, but that as in Noah's days the masses of the people "*knew not*" so it would be in the time of Jesus' *presence* at the second advent. Humanity will go on eating, drinking, marrying, etc., as usual and "*know not*" that he is *present*. The next step was, to see whether the account of the same discourse as recorded by Luke, would harmonize with this new idea of a *presence* unseen, except by the eye of faith, until the "little flock" typified by Noah had gone from among men into the condition of safety (from the coming storm) represented by the Ark—"one taken and another left."

Luke's account was in perfect accord with Matthew's, though in different words—"As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." (Luke xvii:26.)

This was communicated to others of the disappointed ones, and with the remembrance that the time arguments above referred to had been found faultless and unalterable and proved that Jesus was due here in the fall of 1874, came the thought—Can it be possible that Jesus does not come in a fleshly body at his second advent? Can it be possible that his *presence* began at the time indicated in those prophecies, and yet we went on eating and drinking, etc., and "*knew not*" of his presence?

A careful examination of the Word was begun by all deeply interested, to see whether it, as a whole, would be in harmony with this new thought. It was found to be in perfect harmony and opened up and made clear many scriptures hitherto dark: For instance the differences between *natural*, earthly bodies and *spiritual*, heavenly bodies; how that the things which are seen are temporal, natural, but the things that are not seen are eternal, spiritual; that spiritual beings could not be seen by mortals, (without a miracle) and that the object and scope of the Gospel age was, the taking out of the world of mankind a "little flock" to be associated with Jesus in the work of the future—destroying evil and blessing all the families of the earth; that God's plan was not, to destroy all mankind after the gathering of the Gospel church but to "*restore all things*" and destroy only the evil which now rules in the world; that the *fire* supposed to be literal, was really symbolic and signified a great time of trouble which would be the close of the Gospel age and dawn of the Millennial in which all evil principles of governments and society would be manifested and destroyed, as a necessary preparation for the coming blessing.

So says the Prophet: "Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey, for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms and pour upon them mine indignation even all my fierce anger for all the earth, shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy: For then will I turn to the people a pure language and they shall all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent." (Zeph. iii:8-9.)

As to the manner of Christ's coming other scriptures were found to be in perfect accord with the accounts of Matt. and Luke, of its being an *unseen presence*: For instance, the angel's message—Acts i. 11.

"THIS SAME JESUS SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER as ye have seen him go into heaven." This had generally been supposed to teach that Jesus would come in the *flesh*, and be *seen* of men, as he was there seen of the disciples. But when carefully examined the text does not say that any one will see him, but that he will so come as he went away not with "flaming fire" and rolling thunder and great outward demonstration, but silently, *unknown* to the world. And if he "so comes in like manner," how much in harmony with Matthew's and Luke's record—they will eat and drink and know not of his *presence*.

But the angels' language seemed peculiar—this *same* Jesus as though there had been *another* Jesus: Examination revealed the fact, that Jesus since his resurrection is a totally different being from the Jesus who died; that a great change had taken place. While before his death he had been the "*man* Christ Jesus," having the form of a servant and perfect human powers, etc., and yet none but human powers, except as the Father's power was operated and manifested through him: (John xiv. 10.) Yet now, since his resurrection he claims *divine powers* not as the Father in him, but as his own, saying—"All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me" and he is no longer a natural, but a spiritual body. It was sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body—sown mor-

trine of the Trinity ('God in three persons'), the immortality of the human soul, a hellfire of torment for the wicked, and other unscriptural teachings. They say that the Witnesses *deceived* them, sometimes for many years—the same charge that “false apostles” made against Paul. But now, they say, they have suddenly seen the light—that these doctrines that they had rejected were true all along. They repent at having doubted such doctrines and having talked against these while being associated with the Witnesses.

Does not this wavering from one position to another raise questions as to the sincerity of these opposers? Most of them were former church members who came to declare that such doctrines were false, originating in non-Christian religions. While they were associated with Jehovah's Witnesses they offered proofs of their conviction to others as they preached to them. Are these men, when turning against Jehovah's Witnesses, following the pattern of the apostle Paul? He once was a firm believer in Judaism, believing that he could gain righteousness by works of the Mosaic law. But he threw these things down when he became a Christian. His opposers said that Christians should return to subjection to the things of the Law, and trust in such works for salvation. Paul answered: “If the very things that I once threw down I build up again, I demonstrate myself to be a *transgressor*.”—Gal. 2:18.

It is a serious matter to represent God and Christ in one way, then find that our understanding of the major teachings and fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures was in error, and then after that, to go back to the very doctrines that, by years of study, we had thoroughly determined to be in error. Christians cannot be vacillating—'wishy-washy'—about such fundamental teachings. What confidence can one put in the sincerity or judgment of such persons?

Moreover, Jesus said of his disciples: “They are no part of the world.” (John 17:16) But who can deny that the churches of Christendom are an integral part of the world? Those going back to ally themselves with these churches ignore the fact that the clergy have blessed the wars of the nations, members of the same denomination praying on both sides for the victory of their own army and the destruction of the other. Persons returning to support these denominations bring back upon themselves the bloodguilt from which they were once freed.—Compare Numbers 35:33; Revelation 18:24.

If a person has cleaned up from doctrines that dishonor God—the Trinity, the fiendish torment of souls in an eternal hell of fire, the destruction of our planet Earth, the support of blood-spilling national warfare and like beliefs that would make the Christian defiled as a part of the world—and then turns back to take up these doctrines again, he is doing what the apostle Peter described of some persons in his day. Peter wrote: “Certainly if, after having escaped from the defilements of the world by an accurate knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they get involved again with these very things and are overcome, the final conditions have become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them not to have accurately known the path of righteousness than after knowing it accurately to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. The saying of the true proverb has happened to them: ‘The dog has returned to its own vomit, and the sow that was bathed to rolling in the mire.’” —2 Pet. 2:20-22.

MAKING SURE OF ONE'S POSITION

How, then, can a person be sure that his position is right if he has developed faith in Jehovah God and His kingdom through studying with Jehovah's Witness-

tion of holy spirit, the "faithful and discreet slave"* does the appointing of men in the congregations to serve as elders and ministerial servants. (Acts 20:28) These must have the Scriptural qualifications stated at 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.

¹⁹ Truly, all the foregoing demonstrates that the pathway of Jehovah's people has been and is like the bright light that gets ever brighter. (Prov. 4:18) As they came out of the gross darkness enveloping "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion, it was not to be expected that they would see all things immediately in their true light. (Rev. 17:5) The brilliance of revealed truth could have had a

* Jesus Christ foretold that he would put this "faithful and discreet slave" in charge of all his belongings to provide spiritual food for his followers. The foregoing facts prove that this "slave" is a composite individual and is associated with the Christian witnesses of Jehovah.—Matt. 24:45-47.

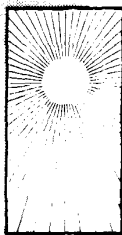
19. Why was it not to be expected that full and complete light would come at once?

blinding, even a confusing, effect upon them spiritually. This could be compared to a person's coming out of a totally dark room into bright sunlight. It would take time for the person's eyes to adjust to the sudden glare of brilliant sunlight.

²⁰ And, as we have seen, the progressive light of truth covers a wide range. There are refined understandings as to doctrines, as to prophecies, as to Christian conduct and the commission of Christians, as to the meaning of Jesus' parables, as to proper congregational organization, and so forth. All of this is clear enough. But some might ask the question: Why does it seem that the path of true Christians does not always go straight forward? What is the explanation? For answers to these questions we refer the reader to the succeeding article.

20. (a) What wide range has been covered by the progressive light of truth? (b) What question remains for consideration?

The Path of the Righteous Does Keep Getting Brighter



"When one ruling over mankind is righteous, . . . then it is as the light of morning, when the sun shines forth."—2 Sam. 23:3, 4.

THE light on the pathway of Jehovah's servants from earliest times to the present has kept on increasing. This has been even more so since that notable year 1914 when, as developments here on

1. What does 2 Samuel 23:3, 4 lead us to expect, and has this been realized?

earth showed, "the kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah] and of his Christ." (Rev. 11:15) Light from God's Word has flashed forth, like the sunshine on "a morning without clouds" to illuminate ever more clearly

the pathway that Jehovah's servants must tread.—2 Sam. 23:3, 4.

² However, it may have seemed to some as though that path has not always gone straight forward. At times explanations given by Jehovah's visible organization have shown adjustments, seemingly to previous points of view. But this has not actually been the case. This might be compared to what is known in navigational circles as "tacking." By maneuvering the sails the sailors can cause a ship to go from right to left, back and forth, but all the time making progress toward their destination in spite of contrary winds. And that goal in view for Jehovah's servants is the "new heavens and a new earth" of God's promise.—2 Pet. 3:13.

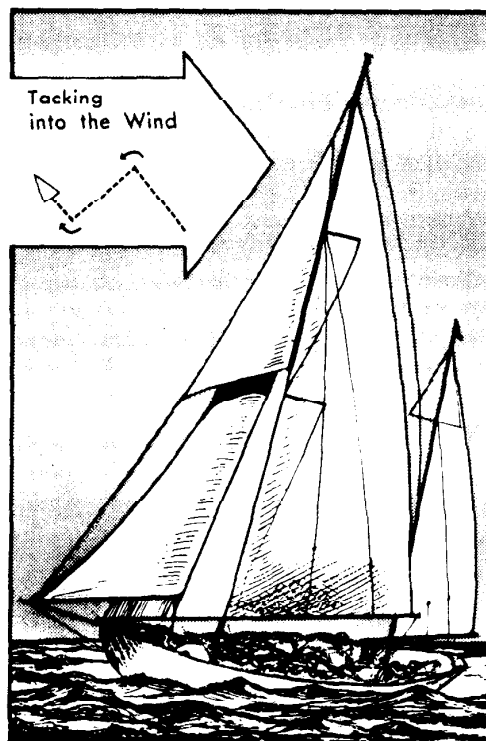
³ There is no question that Jehovah God is continuing to bless the global activity of his witnesses, as directed by the "faithful and discreet slave." This can be seen by the fruits. Remember, Jesus said: "Every good tree produces fine fruit." And such righteous fruits are to be seen internationally today in one people only—the united, global society of Jehovah's Witnesses.—Matt. 7:17.

⁴ No matter where we may live on earth, God's Word continues to serve as a light to our path and a lamp to our roadway as to our conduct and beliefs. (Ps. 119:105) But Jehovah God has also provided his visible organization, his "faithful and discreet slave," made up of spirit-anointed ones, to help Christians in all nations to understand and apply properly the Bible in their lives. Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication that God is using, we will not progress along the road to life, no matter how much Bible reading we do.—Compare Acts 8:30-40.

2. How may we regard periodic adjustments in viewpoint?

3. What evidence is there that Jehovah is continuing to bless his witnesses?

4, 5. In addition to his Inspired Word, what other instrument has Jehovah God used to guide his people?



⁵ Regarding God's channel of communication, Jesus said that the "faithful and discreet slave" would provide spiritual nourishment at the right time for all his followers and that he would set this "slave" over all his belongings. (Matt. 24:45-47) It is also noteworthy that the apostle Paul, at Ephesians 4:11-16, indicated that the Christian congregation needed not only such inspired instruments as apostles and prophets but also evangelizers, shepherds and teachers to help Christians to arrive at the oneness in the faith and the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, and to gain full spiritual maturity.—See also 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 1:9-11.

"This "faithful and discreet slave,"

6. Because of what factors has it been necessary at times to reevaluate viewpoints?