

be limited to those who are devoted to Jehovah God. This explains why the Lord's Word cannot be understood by those who are not in harmony with God. If a man wants to understand the Word of the Lord, he must devote himself to the Lord honestly and sincerely. It is clearly stated in Psalm twenty-five, verse fourteen: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant."

The apostles, under the supervision of the Lord, organized the church in their day. To the members of the church of that time the written epistles or letters of the apostles were directed, but they were intended more particularly for the understanding, aid, and comfort of the members of the church at the end of the world where we now are. The apostle's own words so state in Romans, chapter fifteen, verse four, and First Corinthians, chapter ten, verse eleven. After the death of the apostles there quickly came upon the church a time of darkness. That was a long period of darkness and is generally mentioned as "the dark ages". During that long period of time the face of the Lord was turned away from that organization called "the church", so far as revealing his purposes was concerned. That period of time lasted approximately from the third century to the nineteenth century. In that period there was probably a very small number of the true followers of Christ on earth. The number claiming to be the followers of Christ was large, but those who were faithful and true were few in number. That was the period of time when the true and the false grew together, which condition Jesus described in the parable as the "wheat" and the "tares" growing in the same field. He declared they must continue thus to grow together until the end of the world. (Matt. 13:24, 30, 39) The two classes thus growing together, the true followers of Christ were greatly hindered by the false. The teachers in the churches were selfish men interested in political influence and personal flattery. Under the influence and control of the enemy Satan, they caused the truth to become obscure and to be seen very dimly.

Again attention is called to the words of Jesus, the great Prophet, who with authority from Jehovah said to his disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go . . . I will come again and receive you unto myself." It should therefore be expected that the coming again of the Lord would mark the beginning of a better understanding of God's Word. In harmony with this, it is recorded in the book of the Acts of the apostles, chapter three, verses nineteen to twenty-one, that the Apostle Peter shortly after Pentecost uttered a prophecy, saying: "Times of refreshing shall come from the presence [or literally, from the face] of the Lord [Jehovah]; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive [retain] until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world

began." In this the apostle clearly foretells a time of refreshing to the people of the Lord, and that the time would be at the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

That would not mean that Jesus must be bodily present again on the earth, because with him distance from the earth is no barrier. He is a spirit creature of the divine nature, and his power is without limitation, regardless of his actual bodily position. Being clothed with all power in heaven and in earth, he could administer the affairs of the church from one point as well as from another. The Apostle Peter's words just quoted mean that, at a stated time and acting in accord with Jehovah's orders, Christ Jesus would begin to minister to those consecrated to God and give them refreshing. What would be the nature of that refreshing?

Peter mentions "restitution", which word would mean a restoring of that which had been taken away or hidden, and would necessarily include the truth that was hidden during the "dark ages". On another occasion, as recorded in Matthew, chapter seventeen, verse eleven, Jesus said that 'Elijah must first come and restore all things'. Elijah was a prophet of God who did a restitution work in his time, in that he restored to the Israelites an understanding of the truth concerning God and their covenant relationship with God. (1 Ki. 18:39) His work was prophetic and foretold that the Lord would restore his truth to his own people. After Elijah was dead, Malachi prophesied that God would send Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Read that prophecy for yourselves in Malachi, chapter four, verses five and six. That prophecy is proof that another should do a work similar to that done by Elijah, but on a far greater scale and of much more importance.

The restitution or restoring of all things, of which Jesus spoke, and also the restitution mentioned by the Apostle Peter, must begin with the restoring to the people of God the truths that had been hidden during the "dark ages". That restitution work would progress during the manifestation of the second presence of Jesus Christ. It would be expected that the days of understanding of the prophecies would begin sometime after the manifestation of the Lord's second presence, and the understanding would continue to increase thereafter.

The Scriptural proof is that the second presence of the Lord Jesus Christ is invisible and began approximately in the year eighteen hundred and seventy-eight (A.D.). In the New Testament Scriptures, which were originally written in Greek, there are three different Greek words used in connection with the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those words are, to wit: *parousia* (Matt. 24:3) which literally means "presence"; *epiphancia* (2 Tim. 4:1), which means presence and shining forth with in-