

Jesus conceived of the "Parousia." We may safely translate "Parousia" as "Presence," without doing violence to the thought of the Master. He had already come again in every victory of good over evil ; in every conquest of the gospel. He is now coming, for his Presence is in the world, ever gaining fresh victories in human hearts. He will come in the fullness of his glory, when his throne is established in every loving and loyal heart.

The Original Teaching of Jesus and the Traditional Idea.

One question remains : If Jesus thought of his Parousia as an historic process, a spiritual evolution, how do we account for the traditional idea of his Coming as one definite event ? Why did the early disciples watch for his apocalyptic appearance in their own lifetime ? How was it that they did not understand his meaning ? If we place ourselves in any kind of historic touch with them, this will be easily intelligible to us. With the prophecies of Jesus not yet fulfilled in history, with all their Jewish prepossessions of the Messianic work and method, having before them always the pictorial idea of the coming of the Messiah to wind up the present order of things, it would be far more wonderful if they had appreciated at once the original thought of their Master. When we remember how they repeatedly misunderstood Christ's predictions of his death and resurrection, which seem so unmis-takeable to us, we are prepared to find that they did not recognize his Second Coming at Easter and Pentecost. It is possible that the disciples did at first regard his resurrection as the realization of his promised return. St. Peter, too, recognized Pentecost as belonging to the "Parousia ;" at least, he applied to it the words which Jesus had used in predicting his Second Advent. But after these events had passed into history, the disciples ceased to think of them as the fulfilment of Christ's prophecy that he would come again. Their whole tendency naturally was to expect the Coming as one definite event in the future. The destruction of Jerusalem.