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Christ Made Unto Us Sanctification.

(1 Cor. 1:30. Convention Address.)

WE notice that our text assures us that it is "of God" that we are in Christ Jesus. This also agrees with our Lord's words in John 6:44, 45. The Heavenly Father is the Author of our salvation and He has appointed His Son, our blessed Lord, to be our Helper. (See 1 Cor. 8:6.)

Sanctification signifies a setting apart, or separating for a holy purpose. All who are sanctified, set apart, fully consecrated to God, must first be washed or justified. As the wisdom or knowledge of God came to us as a result of our Lord Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, and as justification then came through His merit when we accepted His atonement and turned from sin to righteousness, so also is our sanctification through Him. No man can sanctify himself in the sense of causing himself to be accepted and adopted into God's family of the New Creation, begotten by His spirit. (John 1:13; Heb. 5:4.) As the merit of Christ was necessary to our justification, so His acceptance of us as members of His body, the royal priesthood, and His continued aid, are indispensable to the making of our calling and election sure. The Apostle condemns some for "not holding the head," (Col. 2:19) , and we perceive that such a recognition of Christ Jesus, as not only the Redeemer from sin but as the Head, representative, guide, instructor, and preserver of the body (the church) is essential to each member of it.

In order that we may be sanctified our Lord points out the necessity of our continuance under His care, saying repeatedly, "Abide in Me, . . . as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." (John 15:4.) "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) The Apostle points out this same necessity for abiding in Christ; saying, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10:31.)

In Eph. 5:25, 26 we read, "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word."

In the typical arrangements of the Law Covenant given to Israel, the priests were obliged to wash themselves and put on new, clean linen garments before consecration to their office and work as God's typically set-apart, or sanctified priesthood. Their cleansing and new clothing represented justification—the appropriation of Christ's righteousness instead of the filthy rags of their own unrighteousness, as members of the fallen race.

This shows that justification precedes consecration. The seal or mark of their consecration was a totally different one, and followed the cleansing ceremony, as consecration should in every case follow justification. The sign or mark of consecration or sanctification was the anointing with the holy oil, which symbolized the holy spirit.

The anointing oil or symbol of consecration was poured upon the head of the high priest only, but the under-priests were represented in the members of his body, even as Christ is the Head over the church which is His body, and altogether constitute the royal priesthood. So the holy spirit given without measure to our Lord and Head applies to us (His body) through Him. The Father gave the spirit to the Son only; all of the anointing oil was poured upon the Head. At Pentecost it ran down from the Head to the body, and has continued with the body ever since, and whoever comes into the "body" comes thereby under the consecration influence—the spirit of holiness, the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of the truth. (Acts 2:4.)

But in consecrating the typical priests the blood was not ignored. It was put upon all, upon the tip of the right ear, upon the thumb of the right hand and upon the great toe of the right foot, thus showing that the hearing of faith, the work of faith and the walk of faith must all be touched and made holy by an appreciation of the precious blood of atonement —the blood of Christ. (See Lev, 8:22-24.) We note that when Moses slew the "ram of consecration," he took its blood and put it upon each of the priests (under-priests as well as high-priests) separately. This shows that our consecration is an individual work. Thus by our consecration we are enabled to have the "hearing of faith," and to appreciate God's promises as none but the consecrated can. Our hands are consecrated, so that whatsoever our hands find to do we do it with our might as unto the Lord. Our feet are consecrated, so that henceforth we "walk not as other Gentiles" but "walk in newness of life," and even "as we received Christ, so walk in Him."

The choice portions of the ram, its inwards and fat, represented our heart sentiments, our best powers. These were taken in the hands of the priests and .'waved"—passed to and fro before the Lord—representing the fact that a consecrated offering is not given to the Lord for a moment, a day or a year, but that we consecrate to continually keep our affections and powers uplifted, never ceasing until accepted of Him as having finished our course. Also the seven days of consecration (Lev. 8:33, 35) showed that we are consecrated to God's service, not for a part of our time only, but for all of it.

The antitypical consecrating of the antitypical priests is confined to the present (Gospel) age. It has progressed steadily since our Lord and Forerunner “offered up Himself’ and’ will be complete before this age has fully ended.

The question arises—To what end or service are God’s people, the Royal Priesthood, consecrated or set apart?

Some may be inclined to answer—To live without sin, to practise the graces of the spirit, to wear plain clothing and in general to live a rather gloomy life now, hoping for greater liberty and pleasure hereafter.

We reply, This is the common but mistaken view. True, God’s people do seek to avoid sin, but that is not the object of their consecration. Before consecration, they learned the exceeding sinfulness and undesireableness of sin, and saw Christ Jesus as their sin-bearer and cleanser. Consequently, they had fled from sin before consecration. When consecrated they will still loathe and abhor sin, and that more and more as they grow in grace and in knowledge; but we repeat that to seek to live free from sin is not a proper definition of consecration or sanctification.

It is true also that all of the consecrated will seek to put on the graces of Christ’s spirit and example, but neither is this the object of our call to consecration under the Gospel high-calling. It is true, also, that our consecration will lead to plainness of dress, and bring upon us suffering for righteousness’ sake in this present evil world, but these are not the objects of our consecration. They are merely incidental results.

The object of God in calling out the Gospel church, and providing for the consecration or sanctification of its members, is a grand and worthy one; and when once clearly seen by the eye of faith it makes all the incidentals which it will cost, such as self-denials in dress, loss of friends and companionships, and even persecution for the truth’s sake, etc.. to be esteemed but light afflictions, not worthy to be compared to the glorious object of our consecration, which is that we may become “partakers of the divine nature,” and “joint-heirs with Christ,” and together with Him bless the world during its day of judgment—the Millennial Age.

God in His wisdom and foreknowledge knew that sin would enter this world and bring its blight--sorrow, pain and death. He foreknew that after their experience with sin, some of His creatures would be, not only willing, but anxious to forsake sin and return to His fellowship and love and the blessing of life everlasting. It was in view of this foreknowledge that God formed His plan for human salvation.

In that plan Christ Jesus our Lord had first place, first honour. As He was the beginning of the creation of God, so He was the chief of all God’s creatures thus far brought into being. But God purposed a new creation—the creation of a new order of beings different and higher than men, angels and archangels —higher than all others, and of His own divine essence or nature.

The worthiness of anyone accepted to that great honour should be recognised not only by God Himself, but by all of His intelligent creatures. Hence, God, who well knew the character of His first-begotten Son (our Lord Jesus) , decided to prove or test His well-beloved Son in a manner that would prove to all of His intelligent creatures the -worthiness of the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing.” (Rev. 5:12.)

But the exaltation of our Lord, who already was the chief of all creation, was even less remarkable than another feature of the divine plan, fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, (1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:4); namely, that God would make to some of His human creatures (of the race sentenced as unworthy of any future life, but redeemed from that sentence by Christ’s sacrifice) an offer ofjoint-heirship and companionship with His beloved Son, in the order of the new creation (of the divine nature) of which He has made the worthy Lamb the Head and chief, next to Himself. (1 Cor. 15:27.)

This offer is not made to all of the redeemed race, but to many. “Many are called.” The called are only those who in this age are justified by faith in Christ’s atoning sacrifice. Unbelievers and scoffers are called to repentance and faith; but none are called to this high calling of participation in the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) until they have foresaken sin and laid hold upon Christ as their Redeemer.

If the worthiness of the Lamb was necessary to be shown, the worthiness of those whom He redeemed to be His joint-heirs (called also the Bride, the Lamb’s wife) would also need to be shown, proved, manifested before angels as well as before men, that God’s ways may be seen to be just and equitable.

It is for this reason that God calls upon those whom He does call, to consecrate themselves to Him not in dress or word merely, but in everything. It is not a consecration to preach merely, although all the consecrated will delight to use every opportunity in telling to others the good tidings of God’s love. It is not a consecration to temperance reform, social reform, political reform, or any other work of reform, although we may and should feel a deep interest in anything that would benefit the fallen race. But our devotion should be as that of a maid to her mistress, or of soldiers to their officers, or better yet, as that of a dutiful child toward a beloved parent —swift to hear, quick to obey, not planning or seeking our own wills, but the will of our Father in heaven. Just such an attitude is implied in the words sanctified or consecrated to God. It takes hold of the will, and therefore rules the entire being, except where uncontrollable obstacles hinder. And since our call and acceptance are based upon the ransom-sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which accepts a perfect will on the part of those trusting in the precious blood, and does not demand perfection of deeds, it follows that all of us, no matter how degraded by the fall, may be acceptable, to God in the Beloved and make our calling and election sure.

The trial of the justified and consecrated consists in the presenting to them of opportunities to serve God and His cause in this present time, when, because of sin abounding, whosoever will live godly and hold up the light will suffer persecution. Those whose consecration is complete and of the proper kind will rejoice in their privileges of serving God and His cause, and will count it all joy to be accounted worthy to suffer in such a cause, and thus to attest to God the sincerity of their love and of their consecration to Him. Such consecrated ones, pure in heart (in will or intention) realising the object of present trials, glory in tribulations brought upon them by faithfulness to Christ and His Word, realising that their experiences are similar to those of the Master, and that thus they have evidence that they are walking in the footsteps of Him who said, “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. Ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own. but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (1 John 3:13; John 15:1 8, 19; Rev. 2:10.)

Furthermore, they glory in tribulations because they realise that the Lord will be near them while they endure faithfully, and that He will not permit them to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but will with every temptation provide some way of escape; because they realise the necessity of forming character, and that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and experience hope —a hope that maketh not ashamed; and because they realise that all of these favourable results of tribulation follow, on account of a genuine consecration in which the love

of God has been shed abroad in the heart, displacing the spirit of the world, the spirit of selfishness. (1 Cor. 10:13; Rom. 5:3-5.)

If any justified and consecrated child of God commit sin it will be, at most, only partially wilful—largely of weakness or deception. He may feel his shame and weep bitterly, as did Peter; but all such penitence would but prove that his sin was not of the wilful kind that would mark him as "of the devil". No, so long as the seed of the truth, and of his consecration, remains in him, he cannot sin (wilfully) . But if any trespass under deception or weakness, and not wilfully, he has an Advocate with the Father—"Jesus Christ the righteous" one, whose merit is applicable for all unwilful errors of such as abide in Christ. If he confess his sin, God is faithful and just to forgive him--because Christ died. (1 John 1:7, 9; 2:1.) But if we should say that we have no sin, no imperfection, we deceive ourselves, make God a liar, and disown the Advocate whom God provided; for we are weak through the fall, and liable to deception and error at the hands of the world, the flesh, and the devil. (1 John 1:8, 1 O.)

Christ Made Unto Us Redemption.

The word redemption here is used in the sense of deliverance, salvation, as the outcome of the redemptive work— the result of a ransom, or corresponding price given. The thought contained in the word carries us down to the full end of the Church's victory, the full-birth condition of the New Creation; although in our text it may very properly be applied also to the intermediate and incidental deliverances of the faithful all along the narrow way, culminating in salvation "to the uttermost" in the glory, honour, and immortality of the First Resurrection.

Our Lord, pointing us forward to the salvation to be brought unto us through the First Resurrection, says to some living at the end of the age, who discern certain signs of the times, "Lift up your heads; for your redemption (deliverance) draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28.) The Apostle, speaking to the same class of New Creatures, exhorts them, saying, "Grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph.

4:30.) In these texts we are referred not to the work of redemption accomplished in the sacrifice of our Lord, but to the results of that work as they shall be accomplished in the perfecting of the Church, which is His body, in the First Resurrection. In the same Epistle (Eph. 1:7) the Apostle declares, "We have redemption through His blood." He here refers evidently to the blessings we enjoy in the present time through the merits of our Lord's sacrifice, covering our blemishes, and working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory by working in us to will and to do God's good pleasure. The thought we would like to emphasize is that Christ is made unto us deliverance in the present time, giving us the victory in present conflicts, as He shall ultimately give us the complete victory by making us perfect in His own likeness.

This thought is still further brought out by the same writer, who assures us (Rom. 3:24) that God's grace has justified us freely (and continues to maintain our justification while we abide in Christ) "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," and which will reach its completion, so far as we are concerned, when we shall be made like Him, and we shall see Him as He is, and share His glory in the day of redemption (deliverance) . In the same Epistle (Rom. 8:23) the Apostle speaks again of the completion of our redemption or deliverance, and of how we must wait for it until God's appointed time. After pointing us to the fact that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together . . . waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God" (the glorified New Creation), he adds, "And not only they, but we ourselves also (called and begotten to the New Creation) which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (son-ship) , to wit, the redemption (deliverance) of our

body--the body of Christ, the Church. of which Jesus is the Head and we prospective members. This will be the end of the redemptive work with us; for although we share many blessings and advantages through the redemption in the meantime, we will not attain our redemption in full until then. (Rom. 8:20, 23.)

Concerning our present condition the share in the redemption which already is ours—our Lord declares, "He that believeth on Me bath everlasting life" (John 6:47) , and the Apostle also states, "He that hath the Son bath life." (1 John 5:12.) We are not to understand this believing to be merely a mental assent to some facts connected with the divine plan of salvation, but a faith in the atonement sacrifice and conduct in accord with its opposition to sin—a living faith which manifests itself in obedience of heart. Likewise we are not to understand the meaning to be that believers have everlasting life in the full sense of the word—in the sense that it shall be theirs eventually, through a share in the First Resurrection. Rather we are to understand that consecrated believers are begotten to newness of life, have the new life begun in them in the sense that their wills are accepted of God as beginnings of the New Creatures which they shall be in the First Resurrection.

We are to understand these statements in full harmony with the Apostle's declaration that "we are saved by hope"— by faith--reckonedly saved, not completely saved. Hence it is that we are to wait with patience for the completion of the good work which God has begun in us—to wait for "the grace (salvation) that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,''—"when He shall come to be glorified in His saints." (1 Pet. 1:13; 2 Thes. 1:10.)

The redemption (deliverance) which is in Christ Jesus—that which we enjoy now, as well as that which shall by and by be completed in us—is everywhere in Scripture identified with the sacrifice which our Lord made on our behalf. While His death constituted the price of our penalty, His resurrection was essential; for a dead Saviour could not aid the redeemed to get back to that which was lost. And our Lord's own experiences in connection with the sacrifice, we are assured, qualify Him all the more for the great work of delivering the groaning creation purchased by His blood. The Apostle declares, "In that He Himself bath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted"— able to deliver them from temptation, which otherwise might overpower them. "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation provide a way of escape." He may suffer us to stumble, but so long as we trust in Him He will not suffer us to be utterly cast down—to fall in the Second Death. (Heb. 2:18; 1 Cor. 10:13.)

Permitting us to stumble may be His means at times for teaching us valuable lessons respecting our own weaknesses and our need to look unto Him as our Shepherd as well as our Redeemer, and to feel our own weaknesses, that thereby we may become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. He is held out before us as our High Priest, capable of being touched with a feeling of our infirmities, while possessing full power to succour us in the hour of temptation. He is specifically mentioned as having "compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way," and as being able to save "to the uttermost" those who approach the Father through His mediation and who continue to abide in Him in living faith, which implies obedience to the extent of ability. Thus we are to rejoice in our Redeemer as a present Saviour, Deliverer, as well as the by-and-by Deliverer from the tomb, by a resurrection;—the Finisher of our faith. (Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15, 16; 5:2; 7:25, 26.)

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They Reigned with Christ a Thousand Years

IT has been suggested that a short article in these columns on the reign of Christ and His church, in contrast with the harvest of the Gospel Age when the faithful members are gathered to the heavenly inheritance, would be of general benefit at this time. A short quotation from an able writer on the Scriptures is as follows:—''Messiah's Kingdom repeatedly referred to throughout the Old Testament was the centre of all Jewish hopes. But the fact that it will last a thousand years was not mentioned; it was merely Messiah's Day. The holy spirit by St. Peter first declared, a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.' St. Paul did not mention the thousand years, but merely proclaimed Messiah's Kingdom, and that He would, reign victoriously until He shall have put down all opposition to God's will. (1 Cor. 15.25.) It is in the book of Revelation that we have the clear statements that Messiah will reign for a thousand years; with His faithful Bride will reign with Him a 'Royal Priesthood'; that during that thousand years Satan will be bound and the whole world will be granted a judgment or trial, the result of which will be life-eternal or death-eternal."

The above statement that "Messiah will reign for a thousand years, and that His faithful Bride will reign with Him," is important and fully attested in such Scriptures as Revelation 20:4.. "And they (faithful overcomers) lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years"; in 2 Tim. 2:11, 12 and Rom. 8:17, "For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him . . If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together"; and also in Rev. 3:21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."

It will be noted that the reference to the faithful Bride reigning with Christ points to the time when there really will be a Bride—at the close of the harvest of this Gospel Age when "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (See Rev. 19:6-8.) It seems very clear, then, that the reign of Christ could not commence until the

full gathering in of the members of His Body, and this Home-gathering or harvest of the faithful church takes place during "the days of the Son of Man"—the days of His presence (Matt. 24:31, 37-42) *—and also described by the prophet as "the day of his preparation." (Nahum 2:3, 4.)

It is of much interest to students of God's Word to find that our Lord, by His own words and through the Apostles, clearly presented the truth that His second advent would be accomplished in progressive stages. The Greek word "parousia", meaning presence, is used in respect of the earliest stage of the second advent, while the words "epiphania", meaning bright shining or manifestation, and "apokalupsis", meaning revealment, uncovering, unveiling (as of a thing previously present but hidden) relate to the same advent later;—not that epiphania and apokalupsis relate to another or a third advent, but merely to a later feature of the second advent.

A full list of the Scriptures where the word "parousia" is found, is given in the booklet "The Manner of Christ's Return and Appearing", and the passages were the words "epiphana" and "apoka lupsis" are used are also enlightening, especially in relation to the subject of the reign of Christ and His church.

The Greek word "epiphania", rendered "appearing" and "brightness" occurs in five Scriptures, and we quote as an example 2 Tim. charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his 'appearing' and his kingdom." It will be noted that the "quick" (the saints—Eph. 2:1) , are judged at the "epiphania", while the "dead" (the world of mankind) are judged at the time of His Kingdom—following the exaltation of the Bride class, at which time "the saints shall judge the world" with Christ (1 Cor. 6:2) , reigning with Him in Kingdom power and glory.

Another passage in which the word "epiphania" is used is Tit. 2:13—''Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious 'appearing' of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." This shows that while the Apostle and the Lord's people generally earnestly desired the second advent of Christ, it is the epiphania stage of the Lord's presence that would complete their "blessed hope"—the union with Christ of the full number of the Bride of the Lamb. The three other passages in which "epiphania" appears are-1 Tim. 6:14, 15; 2 Tim. 4:8 and 2 Thes. 2:8.

The Greek word "apokalupsis", meaning uncovering or unveiling, is rendered revealed, revelation, appearing, coming and manifestation in various Scriptures. The name of the last book of the Bible is from the same root— Apocalupse or Revelation. As an example of the use of this word we quote Rom. 8:19—:'For the earnest expectation of the creature (mankind) waiteth for the 'manifestation' (apokalupsis—revealing) of the sons of God (the Church)

." It will be the manifesting or revealing to the world of mankind that the sons of God, the Church, are exalted and reigning with Christ that will fulfil the earnest expectations or desires of all races, which at the present time they are unable to accomplish by their own imperfect and selfish governments. This manifestation of the "new heavens" (2 Pet. 3:13) cannot take place, of course, until the Bride of Christ is complete, and following the great levelling process which will thoroughly humble mankind, as expressed by the prophet—"For thus saith the Lord of hosts . . . I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." (Haggai 2:6, 7.)

It would seem clearly established from God's Word that during the harvest of this Gospel Age. the gathering in of the firstfruits unto God (James 1:18) our Lord is still the sacrificing High Priest. while being present as the Chief Reaper of the harvest. (Rev. 14:13-16.) However, with the completion of the "fulness from the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25) , and the passing of the present "heavens and earth" (2 Pet. 3:10) , the time will be due for the reign of Christ and His Church to commence—"and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Our Lord’s Great Prophecy.

(Part 5. Continued from February Issue.)

“And then [at that same time] shall appear the sign [evidence, proof] of the Son of Man,” the proof or evidence of the second advent of the Son of Man.

WE should not lose sight of the fact that this entire prophecy is given in answer to certain questions, one of which was, “What shall be the sign of thy presence” at the second advent? Having in mind the fact that few recognized the Messiah at His first advent, and that they themselves had doubts and fears on the subject for a considerable time, they wished to know how they would be sure to recognize Him. At the first advent our Lord showed Himself, and was attested by signs—by His wonderful words and works, and by John the baptizer. What sign should they expect to indicate His second presence? was their pointed question.

Our Lord’s answer assured them that His people would not be left without a suitable and sufficient sign; but of its character He said nothing. “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man.” It will be sufficient for the faithful, watchful people of God, but is not intended for others. It was this class that saw and understood the signs or proofs of His first advent, while the masses of nominal Israel could not discern the signs of their times, and God did not wish that others should discern them; hence many of the wonderful words of life were spoken in parables and dark sayings, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand, being unworthy of the light then due to the faithful only. And so it will be in respect of the sign or evidence of the Lord’s second presence. It will not be manifested to all mankind: it can be recognized only by Israelites indeed, and they must be honest—without guile.

The word sign (verse 30) is in the Greek “seemion” and has the significance of proof or evidence as illustrated in the following cases:

“And many other signs truly did Jesus.”—John 20:30.

“The Lord . . . granted signs and wonders to be done by their [Paul’s and Barnabas’] hands.”—Acts 14:3.

“Tongues are for a sign . . . to them that believe not.”-1 Cor. 14:22.

“Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs.” etc.-2 Cor. 12:12.

Hence, “Ye shall see the sign of the Son of Man,” does not signify that the Lord’s disciples then living will see Him, but that they will have an indication or evidence of His presence at that time. The signs of our Lord’s second presence will be found in harmony with, and corroborated by, the testimony of the prophets, as was the case at the first advent.—Luke 24:44-46.

”In Heaven:”—The sign or proof of His parousia will be given in heaven. Not in the heaven of the Father’s presence and before the holy angels, but in the symbolic heaven, the ecclesiastical heaven, the same heaven which the preceding verse tells us shall be so terribly shaken as to shake out its stars. It is in this heaven—the professedly spiritual class—that the sign or evidence of our Lord’s presence will first be apparent. Some will “see” the fulfilment of the prophetic declarations respecting this day of the second presence, in the marvellous unfolding of the divine plan of the ages, and will recognize it as one of the signs of His, presence. (Luke 12:37.) The judgment of Babylon, Christendom, social and ecclesiastical, is another sign that the, Judge has come, and is reckoning first of all with those to whom as stewards He committed His goods. (Matt. 25:19; Luke 19:15.) “Judgment must begin with the house of God;” and it means confusion and consternation among the Doctors and Chief Priests of the present time, as they attempt to reconcile their doctrines, practices and faiths, as it did to the Pharisees and Priests and Doctors of the Law at our Lord’s first presence;—even though the presence was denied then, as now.

But at the first presence the humble Israelites indeed, whom God accounted worthy, were not confused, but enlightened, so that our Lord could say to them, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear: for Verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.-(Matt:13:17.) So now in the second presence of the Son of Man, the opening up of the divine Word, the discernment of the divine plan showing as well the divine times and seasons, and the confusion upon “Babylon” are satisfactory proofs of the presence of the King.

“Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven.”— Matt. 24:30.

The tribes of earth will not see the sign or proof of the Lord’s presence given only among the “heavens,” the at least nominally spiritual—the churches—and appreciated only by the guileless of these. Nor will they ever see the Lord Himself by natural sight, for He is no longer flesh and to be seen of the fleshly.* Our Lord’s words should be remembered,—”Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more.” (John 14:19.) And the Apostle’s words to the Church are also to be kept in memory, —that we all must he “changed,” and made spirit beings like our Lord, before we can “see Him as He is.” (I Cor.’ 15:51-53; 1 John 3:2.) The tribes of earth, on the contrary, will see the clouds of trouble and confusion incident to the shaking of the “heavens,” and realize it to be a storm which will shake the “earth” also (See Heb. 12:26, 27) , and at that time also there shall be a general mourning of all, incident to that great time of trouble; and eventually all mankind at the close of the storm shall discern, recognize the new King with the eyes of their understanding and shall mourn for sin, and that they ever in blindness rejected Him;—the Jew first.—See Zech. 12:10-12.

“And he shall send his angels with a great trumpet and he shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Sinaitic MS. omits “sound.”)—Matt. 24:31.

This work will be in progress in the interim, the “harvest.” The angels (messengers of the new King of earth) will do a separating work, not between the church and the world, but a separating work in the nominal church—among nominal professors, the present “heavens.” This work is represented under various symbolic descriptions,—it is the gathering of the wheat from the tares into the barn (Matt. 13:30): it is the gathering of the good fish into baskets and the casting of the unsuitable fish caught in the gospel net back into the sea (Matt. 13:47-49); it is the gathering of His jewels (Mal. 3:17); it is the calling of “my people” out of Babylon (Rev. 18:4); it is the midnight cry to the virgins, which separates the wise from the foolish (Matt. 25:6); and in this prophecy it is the gathering of the “elect” from all the non-elect of Christendom, from the four winds — from every quarter.

We are not to expect spirit-angels to appear with wings and to fly through the air blowing a great trumpet, and here and there catching away some

of the saints;—no more than we are to expect to become literal fish and to be put into literal baskets, or literal grains of wheat to be put into a literal barn. The angels or messengers used by our Lord in this harvest gathering will, we believe, be such messengers as He has used in His service throughout this age—earthly servants, begotten of His holy spirit—”new creatures in Christ Jesus.”

The “great trumpet” we understand to be the seventh trumpet,” as symbolic as the preceding six (Rev. 11:15-18) , none of which ever made any literal sound. It has been symbolically sounding since last century, and will continue to the end of the Millennium. With the beginning of this trumpet began the “harvest” and the reaping and separating, which must continue until the “elect,” the “wheat,” are all gathered out of the present heavens (ecclesiastical systems)’—unto the Lord. The “angels” (messengers) are those who carry the message of the Lord’s Word which produces the separation and gathers His elect to Himself.

It is the privilege of the faithful people of God who are now translated out of darkness into the marvellous light— who are permitted to see and hear, to be co-workers with their Lord as His angels—messengers or servants—in this as well as in all the other features of the work, throughout the age. By His grace such have plowed and sowed and harrowed and watered, and now the same class may also reap with the Chief Reaper.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

Germany.

Dear Brethren in Christ--The peace of our great God and Father and the love of our dear Master and Redeemer be with you always. •

Many, many thanks dear brethen for your kindness of giving me a subscription of your very good and welcome “Peoples Paper and Herald of Christ’s Kingdom.- “The Herald of Christ’s Kingdom” I have already read before the year 1933.

During the Nazi dominion we also were forbidden and persecuted and all our literature has been confiscated by the Gestapo robbers, “Manna Book,” old Towers before 1916, Bibles, the Six Volumes and Hymn Books etc.

We are here in Kiel about 30 brethren and are growing more and more. The most of them, also myself, were formerly Watch Tower, and know the truth how we got it from our dear Lord by our dear Brother Russell since the first world war, and was baptized in 1918.

The Lord has been always with us also in the now passed second world war; it was a horrible time. I myself and other brethren lost all possessions, habitation and furniture, etc., by bombs; 80% of all buildings here in Kiel are destroyed. I myself am dwelling, sleeping, cooking, etc., with my dear Sister in one room.

But in spite of all these trials we are in good hope in the Lord, because we have saved our faith (1 Pet. 1:5-7) , and we know that our Heavenly Father who has begun the good work in us, will also perform it.

It is winter here upon the north globe, but the Lord our God may give, that in our hearts it may be always summer, and the Sun of grace of our great God and Father may always shine into our hearts, that fruits of the spirit, love, kindness, meekness and all the other qualities may grow and ripen, in order to hear one day the very welcome word of the Lord—”Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.”

This to bear in .mind, I send you and all dear ones of your class and country hearty greetings. Your thankful Brother in Christ, Sister and all brethren of our class.

Germany.

Dear Brethren all, in the same precious hope.—It was some time ago already when we received your “Peoples Paper,” all issues from January to October 1948. We so heartily thank you for it; we enjoy your little “Paper” so much. Recently “The Mystery of Christ” arrived together with one issue of your “Paper.”

I had a very busy time, sometimes I really felt overburdened with all sorts of work. I now know that I often did works which need not be, worldly hasting and running often overwhelm us that we feel fastened to the earth, instead of feeling free like eagles.

Some months after I had written my first letter to your country I received some hearty letters from several brethren.

I am very happy now and I thank you with all my heart that you gave my name and address to the friends. It is so very, very helping and encouraging to exchange experiences and opinions with friends in far away countries; to recognize that all over the earth our Lord’s children are being prepared for future days, every one just as he specially needs the preparation. What for oneself not at least mean any difficulty to overcome, gives much trouble and pains to the friend. Oh yes, our Father knows what every one of His children needs and so He leads the events; He brings the good and the hard days for us that every one might prove his faith in the circumstances which surround him.

There is now a great activity to be seen in our destroyed towns. Ruins are being removed, houses grow up like mush rooms, dredges are busily at work to bring away all rubble to make people forget the days of war . . . Money is very short in Germany now, prices climbed high and pays did not follow; people need clothings and furniture and all sorts of things for the household, and with their money they just reach to buy their food and the most necessary things .

. . Germany must distinctly feel that it lost a war. All houses which were not destroyed by bombs will now become taxed; their owners must supply a good part of the money which those shall receive that lost all they had. I thought this would perhaps interest you .. .

We like to direct our eyes to Palestine; the State of Israel often takes our interest—fulfilled prophecy. Aren’t we very blessed and favoured that we can recognise all these things; we have much reason to be thankful and to serve our Lord with joy. I think that it is very late on the clock of the

world and that we must more earnestly than ever before strive to become ready and Christlike in heart and mind. What is the good of all knowledge and wisdom when our inner heart did not hold step with it, when we are lacking love and kindness.

I heard of many different opinions among the brethren .. . we and the brethren near us (we are only few that are of the same faith) are convinced that our Lord is already present, breaking down the old world order; better said: sending this breakdown and teaching His faithful ones that they will have sufficient oil for the days in the dark to come .. .

My dear mother and I so heartily greet you in the love which combines all our Father's children. We remember yours before His throne of grace; may He constantly bless your work and service. We again thank you for your love towards us. I shall from time to time come to you on the pen and paper way. Lovingly your Sister.

Dear Brother—For the past week I have been teaching a young man at work, and he told me his mother and father were Seventh Day Adventists. This gave me the opportunity to point out to him where they were trying to do the impossible; that we were now under Grace, and that Christ, by keeping the Law, showed to the Jews how far short of perfection they were. As the Law was perfect, it took a perfect man to keep it, and Christ was the only man who was able to keep it. I pointed out to him that in trying to keep the sabbath they were putting themselves under the Law, and how Christ by His sacrifice done away with the Law by nailing it to His cross, and it was only a "schoolmaster" to bring them to Christ^, who had broken down the middle wall of petition. I quoted that passage of Scripture which states—"Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink . . . or of the sabbath days." (Col. 2:16.) Having the 6th Volume with me at the time I read a portion of it dealing with the Law and he was rather surprised and asked me if I could get him a 6th Volume. I told him I could and would write straight away to Melbourne for it, and he would have it in about a fortnight's time. So if you could send me a 6th Volume in small edition I will be obliged and will send you a money order covering cost of same.

Well, dear Brother, I trust you are well and that the Lord will richly bless you and strengthen you. Give our love to all the dear ones in Melbourne and we are still in the race and looking unto Jesus who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Yours in His service.

FRANK & ERNEST BIBLE TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 Metres - 10 a.m.

Sydney, 2KY, 294 Metres - 8.15 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 Metres - 5.10 p.m.