The SIGN OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

Is that sign now seen?

If he were to be visible,
no sign would be needed
Since a sign was foretold,
he must come invisibly

THE SIGN OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

All lovers of righteousness should be keenly interested in the second presence of Christ. Why? Because it marks the establishment of God's kingdom, which kingdom will end all wickedness and bring about the complete triumph of righteousness. —Matthew 6:10.

Many who await Christ's second presence expect him to return in a human body, when "every eye will see him". (Revelation 1:7) But does it necessarily follow that this must be a literal seeing? How could people scattered over millions of square miles all see a human body in the sky at the same time?

At his first presence Christ was made flesh that he might be the seed of Abraham, that he might prove his obedience under test and that he might provide the ransom sacrifice for mankind. Having accomplished these things his second presence will be with glory, when he will destroy his enemies and bless all who love righteousness. Such will require not a human, but a mighty spirit body.—Matthew 20:28; 25:31; 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26; Galatians 3:16, 29; Hebrews 5:8.

Besides, after his resurrection he entered heaven, and "flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom". He was "put to death in the flesh, but . . . made alive in the spirit". He said: "A little longer and the world will behold me no more." (John 14:19; 1 Corinthians 15:50; 1 Peter 3:18) True, his disciples saw the resurrected Jesus in human form, but they also saw angels at that time. Surely those angels were not actually flesh and blood, but had materialized for the occasion. So Christ also merely assumed a human form to prove to his disciples that he was indeed raised from the dead. Also, Paul wrote: "Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, certainly we now know him so no more."—1 Corinthians 15:3-8; 2 Corinthians 5:16.

It was because we are not to expect Christ to return in human form that his disciples asked: "What will be the *sign* of your presence and of the consummation of the system of things?" ("End of the world," *King James Ver.*) In reply Jesus, among other things, said:

"Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be great earthquakes and in one place after another pestilences and food shortages." "Then people will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you . . . And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for the purpose of a witness to all the nations, . . . when you catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation . . . standing in a holy place . . . begin fleeing to the mountains."—See Matthew 24, 25; Mark 13; Luke 21.

Composite Sign Appears

Clearly if these things are to mark the *sign* of Christ's presence they must all come at the same period of time and must be of such magnitude as to remove all doubt as to their being in fulfillment of Jesus' words. Do we find such to be the case? We do. And since when? Since 1914. Incidentally, Bible chronology also fixes the time for Christ's second presence and the assuming of his right to rule as at 1914; this date was published in *The Watchtower* as early as 1879, 35 years before 1914.

Has 'nation risen against nation and kingdom against kingdom' since 1914? They certainly have. Why, World War I, which began that year, was seven times as great in number of countries involved, in number of combatants and casual-

ties and in cost as all the previous 901 major wars, covering 24 centuries, combined! And World War II was nearly four times as great in all these respects as World War I.

And what about 'great earthquakes in one place after another'? From 1915 to 1949 earthquakes took a toll of 848,450 lives, injured 577,876, made 4,636,169 homeless and destroyed billions of dollars' worth of property. In fact, since 1914 major earthquakes have annually been taking ten times as many lives on an average as they did before that year.

Pestilences and Famines

Have we also seen an increase in diseases, "pestilences," since 1914? Yes, we have. The "Spanish influenza", termed "one of the most devastating plagues of all time", took 20 million lives and put 200 million in bed in a few short months. And in spite of all that modern medical science can do, cancer, degenerative diseases of the heart, liver, kidneys, etc., as well as mental and nervous disorder, continue to increase.

Wars? Yes. Earthquakes? Yes. Pestilences? Yes. And what about food shortages? Yes, regarding them also Jesus' prophecy has had fulfillment. Shortly after World War I China saw its greatest famine of all time, in which 15,000 died daily and 30 million were affected. And India saw 32 million on the verge of starvation, a situation termed "unparalleled elsewhere in the history of the world". In 1921-1923 Russia saw people dying like flies and 35 million affected by famine. Some ten years later six million Russians starved to death in eighteen months. In 1946 the press reported that "one fourth of the world is starving today". Food shortages or famines have affected twice as many people since 1914 as in the 900 years before.

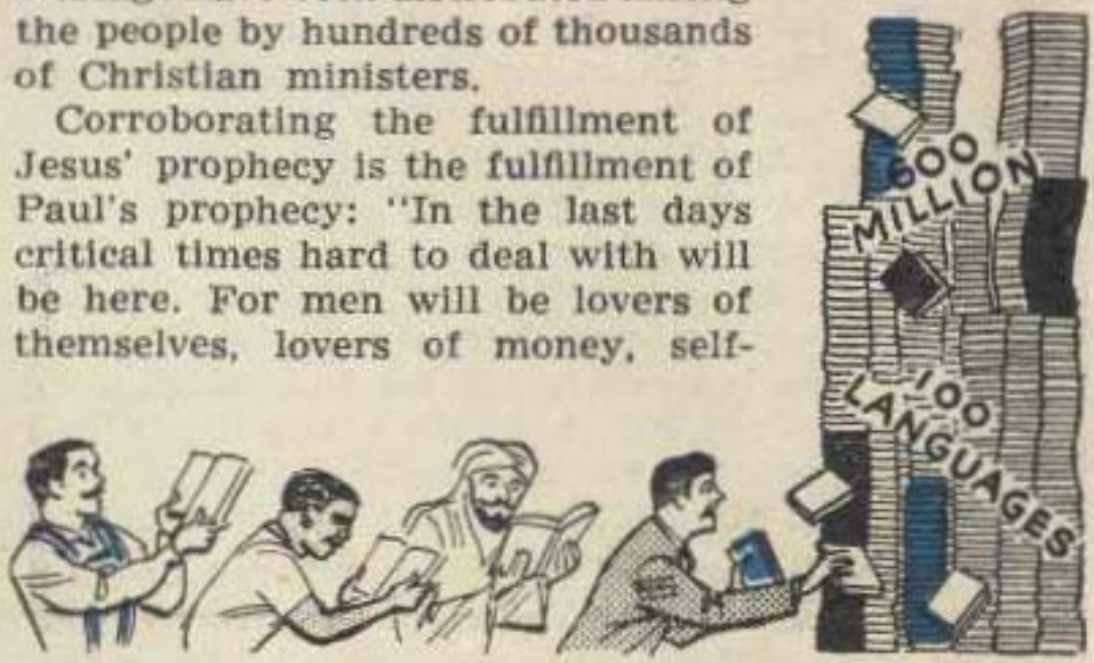
And have the fires of persecution flared up in a striking way since 1914? Yes, they have. Due to war hysteria and the rise of the totalitarian monstrosities

of nazism, fascism and communism, Christians have suffered to an extent and degree not equaled since the Dark Ages. In Germany alone, ten thousand Christian witnesses were put in concentration camps, where two thousand lost their lives and two thousand others were invalided for life.

And do we see 'a disgusting thing that causes desolation in a holy place'? In 1919 the League of Nations was hailed as the "political expression of God's kingdom on earth"; only to suspend animation during World War II, and to be revived in the form of the United Nations. (See Revelation 17:8.) This makeshift stands in the holy place, in that it would take the place of God's kingdom in the hearts of the people. It desolates their faith in that kingdom, and in God's sight is considered a disgusting thing.

Jesus' words regarding the preaching of the good news of his established kingdom have likewise had marked fulfillment. Since 1914 this good news has been published in upward of 100 languages and in more than 130 lands and isles of the sea. Upward of 600 million bound books and booklets containing this message have been distributed among the people by hundreds of thousands of Christian ministers.

Corroborating the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy is the fulfillment of Paul's prophecy: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-



assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, without gratitude, with no loving-kindness, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with self-esteem, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Truly all the foregoing evidence unites to form a conclusive, overwhelming avalanche of testimony before which no skepticism or quibbling can stand. The sign of Christ's presence can be seen by all. The fulfillment of Bible prophecy does indeed show that the year 1914 marked the second presence of Christ, the establishment of his kingdom and the beginning of the "time of the end" of this old system of things.

Scriptures quoted herein are from the "New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures".

THE WATCHTOWER

The *Watchtower* magazine is founded on the very pinnacle of wisdom, the Bible. For more than seventy years it has called attention to the Bible prophecies dealing with the second presence of Christ, the world's time of the end and the establishment of God's kingdom. It shows that we are living at the very portals of the new world. Its message advances as the light on God's purposes and works increases. *The Watchtower* is a 32-page journal issued semimonthly and is available at the subscription rate of one dollar a year. Single copies, five cents. Write:

WATCHTOWER
117 ADAMS ST. BROOKLYN 1, N.Y.

T9 Printed in U.S.A.

suffered to an extent and degree not equaled since the Dark Ages. In Germany alone, ten thousand Christian witnesses were put in concentration camps, where two thousand lost their lives and two thousand others were invalided for life.

And do we see 'a disgusting thing that causes desolation in a holy place'? In 1919 the League of Nations was hailed as the "political expression of God's kingdom on earth"; only to suspend animation during World War II, and to be revived in the form of the United Nations, which religious leaders have called "the greatest of all international organizations" and "the last hope of concord and peace." (See Revelation 17:8.) This makeshift stands in the holy place, in that it would take the place of God's kingdom in the hearts of the people. It will bring on great desolation on the earth, for in God's sight it is considered a disgusting thing.

Jesus' words regarding the preaching of the good news of his established kingdom have likewise had marked fulfillment. Since 1914 this good news has been published in upward of 160 languages and in more than 197 lands and isles of the sea. Upward of 2,000,000,000 bound books, booklets and magazines containing this message have been distributed among the people since 1914 by hundreds of thousands of Christian ministers.

Corroborating the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy is the fulfillment of the apostle Paul's inspired prophecy: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be

here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Truly all the foregoing evidence unites to form a conclusive, overwhelming avalanche of testimony before which no skepticism or quibbling can stand. The sign of Christ's presence can be seen by all. The fulfillment of Bible prophecy does indeed show that the year 1914 marked the second presence of Christ, the establishment of his kingdom and the beginning of the "time of the end" of this old system of things.

Scriptures quoted herein are from the "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," 1961 edition.

THE WATCHTOWER

The *Watchtower* magazine is founded on the very pinnacle of wisdom, the Bible. For more than eighty-five years it has called attention to the Bible prophecies dealing with the second presence of Christ, the world's time of the end and the establishment of God's kingdom. It shows that we are living at the very portals of God's new order. Its message advances as the light on God's purposes and works increases. *The Watchtower* is a 32-page journal issued semimonthly and is available at the subscription rate of one dollar a year. Single copies, five cents. Write:

WATCHTOWER
117 ADAMS ST. BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11201

T9 Printed in U.S.A.

The SIGN OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

Is that sign now seen?

If he were to be visible,
no sign would be needed
Since a sign was foretold,
he must come invisibly

THE SIGN OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

All lovers of righteousness should be keenly interested in the second presence of Christ. Why? Because it marks the establishment of God's kingdom, which kingdom will end all wickedness and bring about the complete triumph of righteousness. —Matthew 6:10.

Many who await Christ's second presence expect him to return in a human body, when "every eye will see him." (Revelation 1:7) But does it necessarily follow that this must be a literal seeing? How could people scattered over millions of square miles all see a human body in the sky at the same time?

At his first presence Christ was made flesh, that he might be the seed of Abraham, that he might prove his obedience under test and that he might provide the ransom sacrifice for mankind. These things having been accomplished, his second presence will be with glory, when he will destroy his enemies and bless all who love righteousness. Such will require, not a human, but a mighty spirit body. —Galatians 3:16, 29; Hebrews 5:8; Matthew 20:28; 25:31; 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26.

Besides, after his resurrection Jesus entered heaven, and "flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 15:50) He was "put to death in the flesh, but . . . made alive in the spirit." (1 Peter 3:18) He said: "A little longer and the world will behold me no more." (John 14:19) True, his disciples saw the resurrected Jesus in human form, but they also saw angels at that time. Surely those angels were not actually flesh and blood, but had materialized for the occasion. So Christ also merely assumed a human form to prove to his disciples that he was indeed raised from the dead. Also, Paul wrote: "Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, certainly we now know him so no more."—2 Corinthians 5:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

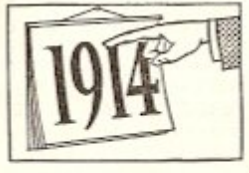
It was because we are not to expect Christ to return in human form that his disciples asked: "What will be the *sign* of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matthew 24:3) In reply Jesus, among other things, said:

"Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be great earthquakes, and in one place after another pestilences and food shortages." "Then people will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you . . . And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; . . . when you catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation . . . standing in a holy place . . . begin fleeing to the mountains."—See Luke 21; Matthew 24, 25; Mark 13.

Composite Sign Appears

Clearly, if these things are to mark the *sign* of Christ's presence, they must all come at the same period of time and must be of such magnitude as to remove all doubt as to their being in fulfillment of Jesus' words. Do we find such to be the case? We do. And since when? Since 1914. Incidentally, Bible chronology also fixes the time for Christ's second presence and the assuming of his right to rule as at 1914; this date was published in *The Watchtower* as early as 1879, thirty-five years before 1914.

Has 'nation risen against nation and kingdom against kingdom' since 1914? They certainly have. Why, World War I, which began that year, was seven times as great in number of countries involved, in number of combatants and casualties and in cost as all the previous 901 major wars, covering 24 centuries, combined! And World War II was nearly four times as great in all these respects as World War I.



And what about 'great earthquakes in one place after another'? From 1915 to 1949 earthquakes took a toll of 848,450 lives. And in 1950 the magazine *Scientific American* said in its September issue: "Major quakes used to occur in clusters, each period of activity being followed by a rest period. Since 1948, the pattern has entered a new phase, with approximately one great quake a year."

Pestilences and Famines

Have we also seen an increase in diseases, "pestilences," since 1914? Yes, we have. The "Spanish influenza," termed "one of the most devastating plagues of all time," took 20 million lives and put 200 million in bed in a few short months. And in spite of all that modern medical science can do, cancer, degenerative diseases of the heart, liver, kidneys, and so forth, as well as mental and nervous disorder, continue to increase.

And what about food shortages? Regarding them also Jesus' prophecy has had fulfillment. Shortly after World War I China saw its greatest famine of all time, in which 15,000 died daily and 30 million were affected. India saw 32 million on the verge of starvation, a situation termed "unparalleled elsewhere in the history of the world." In 1921-1923 Russia saw people dying like flies, and some ten years later six million Russians starved to death in eighteen months. And on November 20, 1963, the New York *Times* quoted the Director General of the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization as saying, "Up to half of the world's population, 1,500 millions, suffer from hunger or malnutrition or both."

Have the fires of persecution also flared up in a striking way since 1914? Yes, they have. Due to war hysteria and the rise of the totalitarian monstrosities of nazism, fascism and communism, Christians have