



The Bible and

**FOUR
TIMES**



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Another rocket rises from the White Sands testing ground in New Mexico.

★ WILL the hydrogen bomb bring an end to the world? Has man at last reached the edge of time?

There are atomic experts who appear convinced that this is so; that a global explosion is a sure result of our uncanny bombs and our hopeless moral climate. All leading nations, plainly fearful of the future, are concentrating full strength upon elaborate programmes of preparedness. From a restrained optimism after World War II, we have now come close to despair.

The dread of an atomic attack on our cities is growing. While Russia builds her stockpile of atomic weapons, costly civil defence preparations are under way. Seven out of ten queried in a recent Gallup Poll expressed belief that Russia is out to become the ruler of the world. Fewer than two out of ten went on record as believing that Russian armed

Is Cosmic DISASTER Ahead?

By Louis B. Reynolds

might is being built up for reasons of defence. The drastic efforts to side-step cosmic suicide are therefore understandable.

Professor Albert Einstein, world-renowned physicist, commenting on the bomb, said:

"The hydrogen bomb appears on the public horizon as a probably attainable goal. . . . If successful, radioactive poisoning of the atmosphere, and hence annihilation of any life on earth, has been brought within the range of technical possibilities."—*The Saturday Evening Post*, June 24, 1950.

Dr. Harrison Brown, in summing up the potential of the hydrogen weapon, observed:

"A string of hydrogen bomb explosions off the Pacific Coast could kill every living thing in the United States with radioactivity. Similarly, a string of H-bombs along the line of the iron curtain could kill every living thing three thousand miles into Russia."—*Science News Letter*, June 17, 1950.

William L. Laurence, atomic expert, writing in *The Saturday Evening Post* under the title, "The Truth About the Hydrogen Bomb," declared:

"There is no doubt that man now has, or soon will have, the means not only to wipe out all life on earth but also to make the earth itself unfit for life for many generations."—*The Saturday Evening Post*, June 24, 1950.

"Perhaps for the first time in history," wrote Anne O'Hare McCormick in the *New York Times*, "we live with the thought of annihilation, afraid of the monstrous forces of destruction we have conjured out of the elements."—*New York Times*, April 8, 1950.

Professor Edward Teller, the Los Alamos scientist who worked on the first bomb, phrases the same thought in these words:

"It is not even impossible to imagine that the effect of an atomic war fought with greatly perfected weapons . . . will endanger the survival of man."—*The Saturday Evening Post*, June 24, 1950.

From the impact of such fearful warnings the world is trying to catch its breath. The hydrogen bomb, outdistancing any previous missile in extent and intensity, has not as yet been completed. But thoughtful men have been trying to sense its meaning. An interpretation of its explosive strength is being carefully evaluated.

"Atomic power," declared Leland Stowe, "looms as a Frankenstein monster beyond the poet's dreams and capable of conquering all the earth. At last there exists a universal time fuse. Its minute hand will tick perhaps for three years—perhaps four—but not for more than five or seven. The minutes tick away, and the doomsman's hand rests just above our shoulders."—*While Time Remains*, page 376.

Is There Any Word of Hope?

But will the hydrogen bomb blow every living thing off the earth? Will it burn the earth out, as some scientists suggest, leaving it to sink into frozen, eternal night? Or is there a better future before men, radiant with life, glowing with the eternal purpose of God?

It is at this point that the timeliness of the Bible can be brought home to twentieth-century minds and hearts. What does God teach men upon this important theme? The question rises insistently from those who are clearly puzzled over the events with which they have come into such close, painful touch.

Briefly, the Bible answers: Our present crisis will eventually culminate in the coming of Christ and in His

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Civil defence workers testing for radio-active debris among make-believe ruins of a modern air raid.

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sharp judgment upon the evil of our time.

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints," declared one of the ancients, "to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Jude 14, 15.

Then Christ will set in motion a new order of things which will run for a long time.

"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isa. 65:17.

But what of the wholesale hydrogen bomb destruction some scientists foresee? It will not happen, for God's purpose for this earth is that it shall be inhabited. If it were to be completely dissolved and destroyed, His purpose would be nullified.

"For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." Isa. 45:18.

Despite the effect of atomic bombs and hydrogen bombs, famines, earthquakes, and other disasters, there will still be a large number of people on the earth when Christ appears. Many Christians are spoken of as being redeemed from among men.

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on

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The Tragedy of Indifference

By Dallas Youngs



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Jesus came to His own, but as a people they failed to recognize Him.

★ MEN may guess and speculate, but God—never. It is never necessary for God to speculate. He knows the "end from the beginning." He knows the future better than we know the past. As James A. Garfield, one-time president of the United States, said, "History is but the unrolled scroll of prophecy." God's divine foresight enables Him to trace the events of the future. And, when the doing of this would contribute to the efficacy of the plan of salvation, God has done just that.

For this reason He foretold, through the prophet Micah, the place where Jesus would be born: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2.

Through this inspired prophecy the Jews could have been saved from ignorance, but God could not save them from indifference. Although there was a national, but vague and ill-defined feeling that the Messiah's coming was near at hand, yet this particular prophecy was not generally understood. Under pressure from Herod the chief priests and scribes quoted from the Holy Writings that their promised King would be born at Bethlehem. The Son of David would be born in David's city.

Satan had at this time cast a hypnotic spell over the leaders of God's people. They knew both the time and place of the Messiah's birth, yet they were unconcerned. Although professing to be in a state of waiting for the coming of the "Holy One," they, as the "foolish virgins," were unprepared.

No thought had been given to, or preparation made for, the reception of the Saviour from heaven. No delegation of Jewish leaders were present as they would have been had Cæsar announced his intentions of visiting Bethlehem. They had made no hotel reservations; in fact, they had not even rented a room in a side street for the entertainment of their divine Guest—a Guest whom their "father" Abraham had delighted to entertain almost two thousand years before.

We don't read that even the visit of the "wise men" stirred up sufficient interest to cause the Sanhedrin to send an investigating committee over to Bethlehem to see if there was foundation to the rumour. Even heathen Herod had more confidence in the prophetic records than had the scribes and the Pharisees. He believed that a Jewish king would be born, and to protect his position he ordered the

execution of all the male children of Bethlehem under two years of age.

The Jewish leaders were fatally preoccupied. Self-interest and the performance of religious rites and ceremonies filled their minds to the exclusion of the most notable event since creation.

The Sin of the Laodiceans

It is almost axiomatic that the Scriptures draw a sad, but distinct, parallel between the condition of the Jewish people at the time of the first advent and the world at the time of our Lord's second coming. The same listless, lackadaisical attitude is found in regard to the second advent that so clearly marked the first. To-day men are concerned and occupied with almost every conceivable thing, except the thing about which they should be occupied—their Lord's return.

The lack of godliness and true worth is forcefully set forth to the latter-day Christians, the Laodiceans: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Rev. 3:14-18.

At the very time when the Jews believed they were the elect of God, the entire nation had almost reached the place of divine rejection. They were self-deceived in respect to the true state of their status before God. They thought they were enjoying the smile of divine approval, when they were not. It is impossible to imagine a more lamentable or tragic state of mind.

Yet, that is the identical condition of the great body of waiting, professed Christian people at the second advent. Satisfied with their self-righteousness they are unable to realize their wretched, poor, miserable, blind, and

naked condition. To-day, as at the first advent, more profess to be disciples than really are. Many say, "I know Him," who do not qualify for admittance into the kingdom. Only some of the ten virgins had the essential oil. Some argue that Jesus should be well acquainted with them since they have taught in the street, preached in His name, and performed miracles. But Jesus knows them not.

Says the poet, "Of all the words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: It might have been." The Bible writer pens this terrible lament of the lost: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jer. 8:20. While many will be saved, still the Bible gives us to understand that comparatively speaking, few, as was the case at the first advent, will be prepared to meet Jesus in peace at His second coming.

It is needful that the prophecies pertaining to the second coming of our Lord be considered with profound and reverent interest if we would make the necessary preparation.

Watch, and Be Ready

Generally God brings His "great things" to pass in a simple, unostentatious manner. Until a few hours before the actual fulfilment of Micah's prophecy, there was no literal, actual evidence in Bethlehem to lead one to believe that that night an event would transpire in the village which would cause the rise and downfall of many nations, change the course of history, and result in the transformation of literally millions of sinners.

Joseph and Mary were not at the time residents of Bethlehem. However, a tax decree from Rome brought the pair on a long, hazardous journey to the city of their nativity for registration. During the visit Mary gave birth to the infant Messiah, and Micah's seven-hundred-year-old prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter. The thing we would like to point out is this: It all came about quite naturally. There were many in Bethlehem that night in response to Cæsar's decree, and the coming of another weary man and woman excited no wonder or comment. Nor was there anything in their appearance to cause a passer-by to realize that this couple was about to fulfil century-old prophecies.

Is it different to-day? How many are there

(Continued on page 15.)

What is Predestination?

By E. R. Binns, M.A.

★ THE subject of predestination must often be a problem to those who are young in Christian experience, or who feel they have been fighting a losing battle against sin. On reading such texts as: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, . . ." (Rom. 9:11) and, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10), the sorely tempted one is apt to throw up his hands and surrender to the enemy, saying: "It's no use. It's obvious that I am not one of God's chosen ones."

Various interpretations have been forthcoming, some fantastic, some apparently sober. Two of the oldest are that of Augustine, who taught that the redeemed are predestinated by the Lord, while the ungodly are merely fore-known and rejected; and that of Calvin, who held that both saints and sinners were actively predestinated to salvation and perdition respectively.

Such theories are based on a too hasty acceptance at their face value of verses such as those quoted above, without due consideration of other texts that counterbalance and illuminate them. The result is that man is robbed of his free will and God is represented as an arbitrary despot devoid of justice. This conception makes nonsense of such verses as: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17), and indeed of the whole Bible, which from Genesis to Revelation is a constant appeal to man to turn from his wickedness and live. Christ did not say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," to automatons that would make a merely mechanistic response!

Predestination Not Conditional

There are three important principles to be considered before the subject of predestination is seen in all its glorious simplicity—a simplicity

which, like all the doctrines of Christ and like the simplest flower of the field, is nevertheless a manifestation of the unfathomable complexity of the divine power. The first point is the goal of predestination. Though Acts 13:48 reads, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed," yet this cannot be taken to mean that this ordaining was independent of the individual's spiritual condition, as a superficial reading of Romans nine might suggest. In Romans 8:29 Paul says explicitly that "He . . . did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son," and Peter puts it: "Elect, . . . through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:2.

It is obvious, therefore, that the gift of eternal life to which the redeemed are predestinated is to be bestowed on those who fulfil the condition of conformity to the likeness of Christ, which consists in obedience to His will, and can be worked out only through the acceptance of the cleansing blood shed on Calvary and the sanctifying power of the Spirit.

The second consideration is: What constitutes the essential difference between the elect and the ungodly? In other words, why was Abel accepted and Cain rejected, and what motive prompted the Lord to say: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"? Rom. 9:13. Is not the answer given at the end of this chapter, in verses thirty-two and thirty-three? "Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." Thus the works of Cain and Esau and all the unbelieving who professed to serve God were of no value because they were not the outcome of faith in the Saviour referred to in verse 35: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed."

What Is God's "Foreknowledge"?

We now come to the third aspect of this subject: Peter says that the saints are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the

Father" (1 Peter 1:2), and in Romans 8:29, 30 Paul builds up a great stairway to heaven starting with the foreknowledge of God as the first step. "For," says he, "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

"Whom He did foreknow"? But surely the omniscient God knows and foreknows all His creatures? Yes, indeed He does. Even of Christ on earth John said: "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." John 2:24, 25. Yet in Matthew 7:23 we read that the same Christ said: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." It is evident that the word "know" is used in this text with a far profounder meaning than in others, where it stands sometimes for a merely superficial acquaintance, or still oftener for a more or less detailed intellectual apprehension.

Numerous texts in both the Old and the New Testaments show that the word "know," when referring to the Lord's knowing His people or being known of them, connotes a deep experimental understanding of the nature and personality of the object of this knowledge, an understanding that springs spontaneously from love and which in turn grows deeper through that love. In such a love as this, faith—a deep, abiding confidence filling both mind and heart—is an inseparable element; they are two indivisible aspects of one and the same thing, just as the substance and the form of a flower are inseparable qualities, though we can think of them separately.

Thus when the Lord accuses His people (Jer. 4:22) of not knowing Him, He uses the word in this deeper sense: superficially, the Israelites knew God better than anyone else, since they had the full light of His revelation through Moses and others concentrated on themselves. No advantages of revelation, however, nor privilege of position as the chosen nation of God, could overcome the hatred of God in those whose hearts were set against the way of God's righteousness, hence Christ's sorrowful words: "Now have they both seen

and hated both Me and My Father." John 15:24.

That it was not the *will* of the Lord that any should be thus lost through their own unregenerate hearts is proved by Christ's lament: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye *would not!*" Matt. 23:37. Moreover, we read in Revelation 3:5 that overcomers' names will not be blotted out of the book of life, which implies that the names of the ungodly will be blotted out—but that they were there originally!

How can a man fulfil God's behest to *know* Him in this deepest sense? Let the beloved disciple John answer: "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." 1 John 2:3. It was John who aroused the deepest personal affection on Christ's part, simply because he, of all the disciples, responded most deeply and so came to understand his Lord more fully. It is a thought-provoking fact that both John and Paul, whose unequalled utterances on the love of God sprang from deep personal experience, at the same time stressed the obligation of every Christian to keep the divine law, for "love is the fulfilling of the law."

The Response of Love

It is therefore clear that those whom God foreknew were those in whom He discerned beforehand (for the future and the past are alike open to His gaze) the spontaneous response of love, faith, and obedience to His offer of salvation, an offer prompted by His boundless grace. Those whom the Father foreknew as His own could be predestinated, called, justified, glorified; they have come voluntarily on hearing His call, into that "strait" way of life which is also straight, leading ever onward and upward to the kingdom. And because they are in that blessed "way," "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. 8:28.

So let us joyfully take courage and press on, heeding the call: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17.



By C. S. Dixon

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"This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world."

★ "THIS Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24:14.

Jesus is speaking. He is answering the question: "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Verse 5. He could readily have told them that this was a matter which they had better leave alone; but instead He patiently and at length explained the subject to them. He told them that there would be wars and rumours of war, but that they should not let this disturb them. He told them that there would be persecution and that false prophets should arise, but that neither should this give them alarm. If they were steadfast and should endure to the end, they would be saved.

This is the subject of the first thirteen verses of the twenty-fourth chapter of the gospel of Matthew, and is an introduction to what follows. Christ now launches into the subject itself, and gives some definite and clear instruction.

The statement quoted at the beginning of this article that, before the end comes, the Gospel shall be preached in all the world, is precise and definite. There can be no misunderstanding it. The end will not come until

the Gospel shall have gone to the ends of the earth. Some have misinterpreted this to mean that before the end comes, the whole world will be converted. But Christ's statement does not warrant any such conclusion. It does not mention the conversion of the world, but only states that "the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world." We have no reason to believe that this includes the world's conversion. Quite the contrary.

Bible Does Not Teach World Conversion

The Gospel has been preached to all civilized nations for many years, but so far only a minority has accepted it, and of this minority only a small portion can be said to be really converted. If we were to wait until all the world turns to Christ, many millenniums would pass: in fact, that time will never come.

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By M. L.

But Christ does not mention conversion at all. He says only that "this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world," not that the world shall accept it.

Thus this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world. All will have an opportunity to hear, and accept or reject it. When the Gospel has thus been preached, the end will come.

Two Centuries of Missions

How is this work progressing? Very rapidly indeed. This could not have been affirmed a few hundred years ago, for little preaching had then been done in large sections of the earth. It is less than two hundred years ago that the church first began to envision the task that must be done before the Lord can come. Few, very few, had a world vision. Christians scantily supported their own little church and paid their preachers a meagre sum to minister to them; and their idea that they had a world responsibility did not occur to

them. Such as urged the larger vision were counted as visionaries, advocating that which was both useless and impossible. It took many weary years before a sufficient number became interested enough to give the idea a trial.

Since then conditions have changed. Should two maps of the world illustrating missionary progress be shown, one, as conditions were two hundred years ago, and another of present conditions, the progress depicted would be most startling. If we should place little lights on the first map where the Gospel had been preached, we should find large parts of the world in almost total darkness. Africa would be dark, also China, India, Tibet, Mongolia, Japan, the islands of the sea, large parts of South America, and most of the smaller nations in Asia. It would indeed be a dismal picture,

cussing would seem far on the way to reality. In fact, while there are still lands where the Gospel has not been preached, they are very few; and men and women are now hastening even to these, consciously fulfilling the statement of Jesus that the Gospel must be preached in all the world before the end can come. To the Christian it is a thrilling sight to see Scripture being fulfilled before his eyes. He can but rejoice as he sees the rapidity with which the Gospel is moving in the earth, and he sees in this clear evidence of the soon coming of the Lord.

Another noteworthy thing about Christ's statement is His use of the word "this." He is not speaking of the Gospel in general, but of *this* Gospel, the Gospel of the kingdom. Different times in the history of the world have demanded a specific application of the Gospel. It was not a new Gospel, nor a different Gospel, but the Gospel as applicable to that time. So Noah preached. What he preached was the Gospel, the same old Gospel of salvation. But he preached it in view of the Flood to come. That aspect of the Gospel cannot be preached now. For the Flood is long since past, and one who attempted to preach as Noah did, telling that a Flood is coming, would not only be hopelessly out of date, but he would not be telling the truth.

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and one examining it would be justified in observing that there is little hope that Christ's commission would be finished within the foreseeable future.

But a look at the map portraying conditions to-day would give great reasons for encouragement. Where before darkness reigned, now light would shine. There would be thousands of lights everywhere: in China, India, Japan, and in the islands of the sea. True, the converts might not be as many as would be desirable; but the fulfilment of the text we are dis-

Everywhere to-day the light of the Gospel message is being made known to men.

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At Christ's first coming, John the Baptist did a mighty work preparing the way of the Lord. Christ says that among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet we could not preach John's message to-day. The essential core of his preaching was repentance and turning to God, the same message that Noah preached and which is applicable to all times and conditions; but the special setting was demanded by the times. But if we preached the same message now, we would be out of date again. For Christ is not now coming to Bethlehem. He *has* come as a Child in the manger, and we are to rejoice in that. John did his work faithfully and well in preparing the way of the Lord. He gave the message for his time. But we cannot follow his footsteps.

The Second Advent

Christ is coming again. He is coming the second time. And it is *this* Gospel of the kingdom that is now due. We can preach that there *was* a Flood. We can preach that Christ *did* come to earth the first time in fulfilment of prophecy. In each of these preachings, as God determined it, the central facts of salvation were the same. So now, the Gospel is the same. It has not changed. Men are still saved by faith, and there is no other way. But the emphasis is not to be upon the Flood; it is not to be upon the fact of Christ's first coming; it is to be upon the fact that He is coming again the second time, that He "was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28.

In preaching the special message now that Christ shall appear the second time, we are to preach the old, old message of forgiveness of sin, of repentance, of conversion. As Noah called upon men to repent because a Flood was coming; as John the Baptist called men to repentance for the kingdom of heaven was at hand; so we are to call upon men to forsake their sins, for Christ is about to appear in the clouds of heaven. These special messages are not to be preached in such a way as to frighten people into the kingdom. They are to be used as God would have them, as additional reasons for serving God.

We emphasize this point, for some would

have us believe that any stress placed on the subject of the coming of the Lord detracts from the real message of salvation. But this cannot be. That argument would have destroyed Noah's message. We can imagine some good souls telling Noah not to emphasize the coming of the Flood. "What counts," they would tell him, "is the old-fashioned message of salvation through the coming Redeemer. Your preaching about the Flood may be all right, but it is not part of the message of salvation." Had Noah heeded such well-meaning people, the antediluvians would never have heard of the Flood until the rain descended upon them.

So in the time of John the Baptist. He was doing a good work calling men to repentance, and baptizing many. Some might have argued that if he would only hold to this preaching all would be well. But he insisted on preaching that Christ was about to appear, and the result was that he lost his followers, who flocked to Christ. If he had only confined himself to his original message of repentance he would have prospered.

But God knew what He was doing when He sent John to prepare the way for Christ. It was John's announcement that brought the first disciples to Christ. While God can do without any particular man, when God does send a man, other well-meaning individuals had better stand aside that God's message might be delivered.

The Day Is Near

At this time when the great sign of the preaching of the Gospel to all the world is in the process of quick fulfilment, the very stones would cry out if men failed to give the message of God now due. Shall the greatest event of the ages go unheralded, and Christ come to this earth in power and glory, and no announcement be made beforehand? Such would be unthinkable. Two thousand years ago Christ said that this Gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations. That prophecy is nearly fulfilled, and we believe that this generation shall witness the last act. Some day in the near future, missionaries will be sent to the last place on earth that has not heard the Gospel, and thus complete the prophecy. That day is near. May we be ready for it.

Must I Believe in the Fall?

By Robert Wilson



★ YES, because the awful reality of sin can be accounted for in no other way. Learned philosophers have failed to explain it. False religions, claiming countless millions of followers, come striding through the centuries of time, yet all quite unable to account for the fact of sin. Science cannot do it, neither do we get any help from modern psychology. All these are able to offer some measure of comfort as a partial antidote against the effects of sin, but none is able to say just what sin is and how it came. The fall of man as it is portrayed in the Bible tells us not only what sin is, but what sin cost.

In order better to understand what the fall implies, suppose we imagine ourselves in the position of some poor benighted heathen who has come into possession of a Bible in his own language for the first time in his life.

What Happened?

One can picture this poor man turning to the first page and reading with amazement and eagerness the simple story of the creation. At verse thirty-one he would find the world that God made described as "perfect." That is the full implication of the phrase "very good." Reading into chapter two he would be delighted to learn that our first parents were placed in a garden. It would be easy for him to compare his own tropical land, with its abounding vegetation and beautiful flowers with this early home of man, for the Garden of Eden has been described as having the blue heavens for its dome, the earth, with its delicate carpet of living green as its floor, and the leafy branches of the mighty trees for its



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Sorrowfully Adam and his wife leave the beautiful garden which had been their home.

canopy—all beautified by the hand of God. Before leaving this second chapter he would know that God had given Adam and his companion permission to eat of every tree in this garden with one exception. The reward for their obedience would be to live for ever.

If by accident the reader now turned to chapter four he would not have read many verses before he was shocked to read that the first child born to this perfect pair, in a perfect world, actually murdered his own brother! Whatever had gone wrong? he would say. A perfect world in the first two chapters but in chapter four all the grim tragedy that he witnesses at times in his own savage land today. Turning back to chapter three, the mystery is solved. Those perfect ones disobeyed God.

Hope for the Hopeless

The third chapter of Genesis is at the same time the saddest and most hopeful chapter in the Bible. On the one hand it tells that man, under whose care God placed the whole earth wherein was everything to please the

senses and delight the eye, turned from his allegiance to follow the rebel, Satan, by disobeying God's explicit command. On the other hand, this same chapter is full of hope. Lest the human race should become discouraged in the unequal struggle against the tempter, God gave a promise of help which should be precious to every seeker after righteousness. Verse fifteen says: "I will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman." Man was not left to the mercy of the rebel, but God Himself put into man's heart an antipathy toward sin, if man would allow God to use him.

-We are not told what was the fruit that Adam ate. There is no indication that it was an apple, neither does it matter. The evil was not in the tree, neither was it in the fruit. The evil was in the act of disobedience. In verse seventeen of chapter two God had distinctly said: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This is very plain speaking, with nothing of the vague ambiguity beloved of men. Yet, in spite of the abundance all around them, there was the fatal coveting of that one forbidden tree.

Adam and Eve did not need to be told that they had sinned. The sad record says that they "hid themselves." The beautiful garment in which they were once clothed had disappeared and left them naked. This was the garment of Christ's righteousness, and so long as they remained obedient it would have been their abiding glory.

What Sin Is

In 1 John 3:4 we read: "Sin is the transgression of the law." Adam in his sin had broken every commandment of God: "Thou shalt not covet," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt have no other gods" — one could go on. The law of God was the standard by which Adam and his descendants could have lived in perfect happiness and harmony. Rightly observed, the law would have been a wall of protection against temptation in every form, but once broken it became, not a protector, but the means of condemning. This is where Adam stood when he disobeyed God. That which was designed to protect him became the instrument of his condemnation.

No man grasped more clearly than Paul the apostle, the offensive nature of sin in the eyes of a pure God. In Romans 5:12, 19, Paul had no doubts about the fall. He even used

his own experience to illustrate the power of sin in the human heart. No doubt bearing in mind his own persecution of the people of God, he shows how, by seeing himself through the eyes of the law, he stood condemned as a sinner. (Verse 20.)

The Law and the Gospel

The seventh chapter of Romans is a masterly presentation of the law and the Gospel. "I was alive," he says, "without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Verse 9. Clearly the change was not in the law, but in Paul. After the vision of the Master on the way to Damascus, he realized, perhaps for the first time in his life, the sinfulness of sin. In verse nineteen he goes on: "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." How easily Paul speaks the language we all understand! In the twentieth verse he says: "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Then we see his wonderful grasp of the fall and redemption of man in the concluding verses: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is Genesis three in the experience of Paul. It could as easily be ours.

Adam was tested in the Garden of Eden as every one of his descendants were to be tested, for the whole world is on probation. From the beginning of history, mankind has fallen into two distinct groups. On the one hand, there are those who obey God, and on the other those who chose to disobey. The tests may be different for different ages and circumstances, but the condition of acceptance never varies. Our first parents failed through disobeying the law of God. The overcomer will triumph, cleansed by the blood of Christ, because he chooses to obey Him.

Thus it is written, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ [the second Adam] shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22.

Is Cosmic Disaster Ahead?

(Continued from page 5.)

the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's

name written in their foreheads. . . . These were redeemed from among men." Rev. 14:1-4.

Besides this number, there will be a great host of wicked, so numerous that the Bible speaks of them as being like "the sand of the sea," who will be destroyed, not by bombs, but by the brightness of Christ's appearing.

"Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." 2 Thess. 2:8.

Two isolated cities, centuries ago, received such a visitation of divine judgment. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is given as an example of the punishment which God will soon bring upon the world.

"But in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:29, 30, R.V.

This is a fire which God Himself will bring upon the wicked. The Bible does not indicate that manufactured bombs will destroy civilization. But the type of that destruction, with its abnormal heat, with its lightnings, and its thunderings, will be in many respects similar to the atomic bomb explosions. God's judgments, however, will be on a world scale.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye

may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight." 2 Peter 3:10-14, R.V.

Get Ready, Get Ready!

There is urgent need that men prepare for this catastrophe soon to lay waste a wicked world. There is a way of escape from destruction in the last days. No-one need be unprepared for the great event, because the way out is made clear to all who will accept it.

Jesus is the way of life. Not only does He give immediate rest from fear, but He gives eternal peace and everlasting life. Why not become acquainted with Him? Why not ask Him to pardon all your sins and accept you into the safe hiding place of His presence?



The Tragedy of Indifference

(Continued from page 5.)

who recognize the signs and conditions that mark the soon coming of Christ in glory? How many are there who are fulfilling, either in word or in conduct or in both, the prophecy of Peter: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

The New Testament is replete with prophecies of the second advent. More than three hundred are to be found there. We would like to take this opportunity to observe, friend reader, that every one of them will be fulfilled with all the accuracy with which Micah's prophecy was fulfilled. Jesus will come. He will come in the clouds with power and great glory. Every eye shall see Him. The righteous will be received into the kingdom. The wicked will be shut out. Will you not, therefore, determine at this moment that by the grace of God you will be among the righteous?

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THE CHILDREN'S Pages



Delores and the Carrots

By Mrs. John F. Underhill

"Oh, here's another big one!"

Delores's eyes grew round with excitement as she dug the dirt away from a big carrot in Mother's garden. It was hard to pull. Some of the green leaves broke off as she tugged, but finally with a jerk, up it came!

How Delores liked raw carrots, juicy, crunchy ones, right from the garden! With three large ones in her hand, she started toward the outside tap to wash off the dirt. She hid them behind her as she went. Why? Because Mother had asked her to stay out of the garden, and Delores knew

that Mother meant what she said.

Somehow Mother guessed what was going on outside when she heard the low hum of water running through the pipes. Before Delores had finished washing her biggest carrot, Mother came to the back door.

"Delores, come here," she called.

Mother did not smile; there was a sad look in her eyes. Delores knew she had disobeyed, and there probably was a punishment coming.

On the wall by the dining room door was a nail. On the nail hung an old rubber fly

swatter. Even in the winter-time, when there were no flies, it was there for a special purpose which Delores well knew.

After a few questions from Mother Delores confessed that she had been in the garden again and pulled some more carrots.

"Bring me the fly swatter," said Mother.

Delores hesitated. This was not a new experience, and as at other times, she wished to postpone the ordeal as much as possible.

"Right now," said Mother kindly but firmly.

Taking the well-worn fly swatter from its usual nail, Delores approached Mother slowly, with the swatter extended before her. But Mother did not take the swatter; she simply held out her hands and waited. Delores laid the swatter in her hands.

"No, Delores, I want you to hit me with it," said Mother.

"But Mother, you didn't pull the carrots. I did."

"Yes, I know. But this time I am asking you to give the spanking, instead of my punishing you."

Tears came into Delores's eyes. She couldn't hit Mother—she *could not!*

"I am waiting, Delores, for



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address, to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than October 30th.

you to hit me—right here on my hand."

Delores lifted the swatter and brought it down very gently.

"Hit harder than that; hit really hard," said Mother.

Delores raised the fly swatter again and brought it down

In the Storm

I looked at the water, green and dark,
And trembled for my tiny barque;
The waves seemed to heap,
Waiting to leap
Upon me.

I listened, and heard the wild gale,
Saw the lightning, and felt the stinging hail;
The wind seemed to shriek,
Waiting to wreak
Upon me.

I seemed so alone and afraid,
Yet my journey, it must be made;
Then a voice, soft and clear,
Close to my ear,
Spoke to me.

"I will take you across all the way,
Through the storm and the floods of each day;
I'm your Pilot, your own,
All the course to Me known,
Trust to Me."

I felt a strong hand on my own,
No longer afraid, and alone;
The waves became calm,
The wind could not harm;
It was He.

My Saviour knew all and He cared;
The trouble and sorrow He shared.
I lifted my eyes,
And saw that the skies
Cleared for me.

Mary Kelly.

a little harder. Then she burst out crying.

"I can't hurt you, Mother. I cannot!"

"Hit me really hard," Mother insisted, even though Delores could hardly see for tears. Delores let the swatter

fall to the floor and put her arms around her Mother. Mother let her cry for a few moments.

"That is the way I feel when I have to punish you, because I love you," said Mother. "Now let us dry those tears, and hang up the fly swatter on its nail."

Delores hung up the fly swatter. She did not want the

carrots now. If her disobedience in taking them from the garden caused Mother this much sorrow and heartache, she would never do it again.

Delores is a big girl now. The fly swatter has long been discarded, but that incident stands out in her memory as the worst punishment she ever received.

THE Sunbeams' CORNER



My Dear Sunbeams,

I USED to think how wonderful it would be if I had been able to see Jesus, and live with Him just as the disciples did. How gladly I would have served Him. I have thought too, how very fortunate were such people as the woman at the well of Samaria whom we see in our picture this time. Nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to give something to Jesus, or do something for Him.

But the wonderful thing is that we can help Jesus and serve Him and give things to Him, just as surely as people did long ago. It is true, we cannot see Him now, nor can we hear Him. Yet He has shown us in the Bible just how we can please Him.

He says that whenever we help someone in need, by showing a kindness or doing good deeds or making some gift, we are really serving Him. I wonder if you can find out where the text is. You'll discover it in Matthew, chapter 25, and it contains the unusual word: "Inasmuch . . ." This lovely text is worth learning.

Of course our loyal Sunbeams do not need to be reminded to be kind and helpful. That is how we shine from day to day, and bring brightness into the lives of others. Charles Kingsley said that at night we should always be able to say: "I have made one human being a little happier, or at least a little better, this day."

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition No. 16

Prize-winners. — Raymond Jeffery, Black Horse Lane, Honiton Clyst, Devon. Age 13; Leon Liddament, 67 Buckingham Road, South Park Avenue, Norwich. Age 9.

Honourable Mention.—Gillian Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Jean Simmons (Torquay); Nigel Payne (Bishops Cleeve); David Simmons (Torquay); E. C. Purllant (Maxey); Greta Crocker (Bracknell); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Vanessa Jezard (Dover); Joyce Hallam (Derby); Dorothy Atkins (Derby); Jilda Sleeman (Torquay); Josephine Hazellin (Clacton-on-Sea); Ruth Price (Wokingham).

Those who tried hard.—Tina Stansfield (York); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Amy Randlesome (Stockton); Margaret West (East Kirkley); Brenda Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Jacqueline Bates (Derby); Richard Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Susan Grant (Southampton); Adrienne Edwards (Torquay); Antony Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Kaaren Heide (Cardiff); Anne Arrowsmith (Yelverton); Diane Ralph (Chatham); Michael Hallam (Derby); John Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Gillian Ball (Bere Ferrers); Harwood Lockton (Belper); David Godden (Folkestone); Margaret Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Heather Payne (Bishops Cleeve).

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Straws in the Wind

Trans-arctic Air Link

ON the fifteenth anniversary of the first Soviet trans-arctic flight from Russia to the United States, General Gromov suggested a friendship air line between the two countries. By this route, mail could be carried from Moscow to New York in eight to ten hours.

Greatest Oil Exporter

"VENEZUELA exports more oil than any country in the world, and as a producer of oil it is second only to the United States," states the *Economist*. "In 1951 the country produced fifteen per cent of the world's oil, and its production is still rising vigorously."

Roman Catholics in Africa

It is claimed that the number of Roman Catholics in East and West Africa has increased between 1927 and the present day from 1,250,000 to 11,250,000.

More Students of Religion

"WHEREAS," says Norman Victor Hope in the *British Weekly*, "in 1945 there were four undergraduate courses in religion given at Yale, to-day there are fourteen. In 1946

only 100 students were enrolled in these classes; to-day there are more than 800—i.e., about one-fifth of the total undergraduate body.

Must Heal Schism

ACCORDING to the *Catholic Times*, "as well as rearming,

Wonderful Love

Thy love as strong as death it is,
Thy friendship tried and true;
Thy life laid down for enemies,
What love for me! for you!

Thy love it passeth knowledge,
Oh, could I comprehend!
Its depth and height are measureless,
Its length and breadth no end.

Thy love to me is wonderful,
No greater love than Thine;
To chief of sinners Thou art Friend,
O Saviour, Thou art mine.

Mrs. M. H. Cooper.

the west must heal its schisms and get rid of its heresies. It must unite under the banner of Christ if it is to defeat anti-Christ. In the unity of Faith is its salvation."

Religion Still an Enemy

IN spite of the fact that the churches in Russia have come round to the idea that Soviet power is from God, says a pamphlet of the Young Communist League, "religion has not ceased to be a harmful and reactionary ideology. . . . The Party obliges all Communists to assist in the practical liberation of the toiling masses from religious superstitions.

"The struggle against religious superstitions is an integral part of our ideological work; . . . propaganda must be militant and combative, but at the same time it must be tactful and made attractive, not alarming, to the faithful."

American Bible Society's Biggest Year

THE American Bible Society reports 1951 as the greatest year in the 135 years of the society's history. The total of six million volumes in 1950 was passed in the first nine months of 1951. The final figure is not yet available. The production programme in 1952 calls for 14,599,750 Bibles, Testaments, and portions.

