

*The Bible and*



# OUR TIMES

**IN THIS ISSUE**

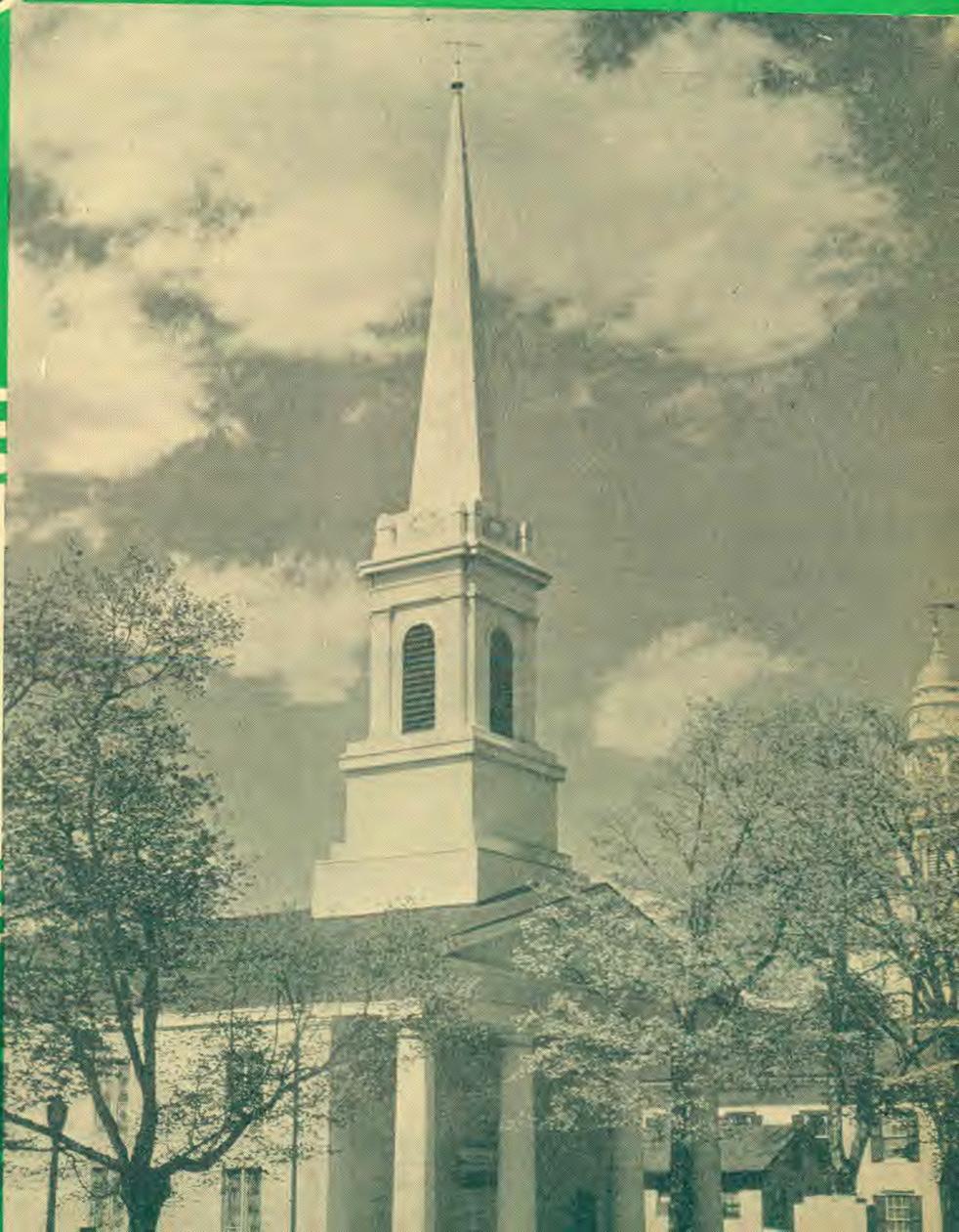
Be Ready!

Which Was the First  
World War?

Has Jesus Already  
Returned?

Will Sinners Burn  
For Ever?

Children's Pages



# BE READY!

By Arthur S. Maxwell

available? Were the public instructed on how to act should disaster strike?

The answer in every case was negative. Some cities had made a good beginning in such matters as the provision of bomb shelters and the appointment of air-raid wardens; but their efforts were hampered by lack of funds and, far worse, by lack of public interest. A few reported almost total public indifference, springing from the widely-held conviction that "it can't happen here."

Authorities responsible for air raid precautions have expressed the hope that the recent atomic explosion in Nevada, with its spectacular destruction of houses and dummy people, would fire the imagination of the millions who witnessed the blast on their television sets. Undoubtedly it had its effect. No-one who saw the terrific flash and the vast mushroom cloud can have been unmoved. But how long will the effect last? How many of those who resolved to "do something about it" have already drifted back into their careless non-chalance?

## A Frightening Prospect

It is safe to predict that if and when an enemy drops an atomic bomb upon a British or an American city, the bulk of the people will be taken by surprise. Survivors will probably complain that they were not properly warned.

Yet warnings have been given, times without number. And more are appearing every few days in leading newspapers and magazines. One of the most recent was published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* from the pen of Dr. I. M. Levitt, director of the Fels Planetarium, who wrote: "To-day every city, town, or village in the world is a potential battlefield. There was a time when only men went out to war with the wives and children left behind in the comparative security of the heart of a country. To-day there is no such thing



A mushroom cloud rises from the Nevada desert after the latest atomic detonation.

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★ LOS ANGELES—are you ready? New York—are you ready? San Francisco—are you ready?

A newspaper reporter was trying to find out whether the chief cities of the United States were prepared for attack by atomic weapons. Telephoning leading officials, he inquired if all police and firemen were fully informed as to what they should do in such an emergency. Were adequate bomb shelters in readiness, properly marked? Were medical supplies on hand sufficient to care for heavy casualties? Was there enough blood plasma

as a non-combatant. Every soul in a country is in the line of fire and when the fire comes it may snuff out the lives of a million people in a few seconds. We seem to be riding a one-way street with only extinction and oblivion at the end of the journey. The world has a frightening prospect facing it and it will take superhuman efforts to avoid the impending cataclysm."

Dr. Levitt is right and everybody knows it. But how many are taking his warning seriously and preparing themselves, their families, and their neighbourhoods for such calamitous events? The general attitude seems to be, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry" and let the future take care of itself.

#### Are You Ready for Jesus' Return?

Precisely the same attitude prevails regarding the second coming of Jesus Christ. Despite all the evidence—the very striking evidence—that this sublime event is soon to occur, the majority of people are even less concerned about it than they are about the possibility of an atomic attack. They will listen to the clearest exposition of the signs of the times and go away declaring it to be an idle tale or "an old wives' fable." Even professing Christians, who should know better, manifest a shocking indifference to the subject of their Lord's second advent. "Rich and increased with goods," and satisfied with the cheap gaiety the world has to offer, they seemingly don't want Him to return.

But He is coming nevertheless. And soon. All the great prophecies of Scripture focus upon our day. Signs in the heavens, and among the nations testify that He is near, "even at the doors." The recent amazing increase of scientific knowledge and invention assures us that this is "the time of the end." Dan. 12:4. The collapse of moral standards, and the spread of violence and wickedness of every kind, confirm the fact that "the last days" are upon us. (2 Tim. 3:1-5.)

There is no doubt about it. Jesus is coming again. And He is coming "crowned with many crowns," as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will be revealed from heaven "in flaming fire" ten thousand times more brilliant than any atomic blaze the eye of man has seen. (2 Thess. 1:8.) And

all the holy angels of heaven will follow Him as He descends the skies in the most glorious pageant the universe has ever witnessed. (Matt. 25:31.)

Are you ready for this great event? People of London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow—and all the cities and villages in between—are you ready to meet Christ face to face in the coming judgment day?

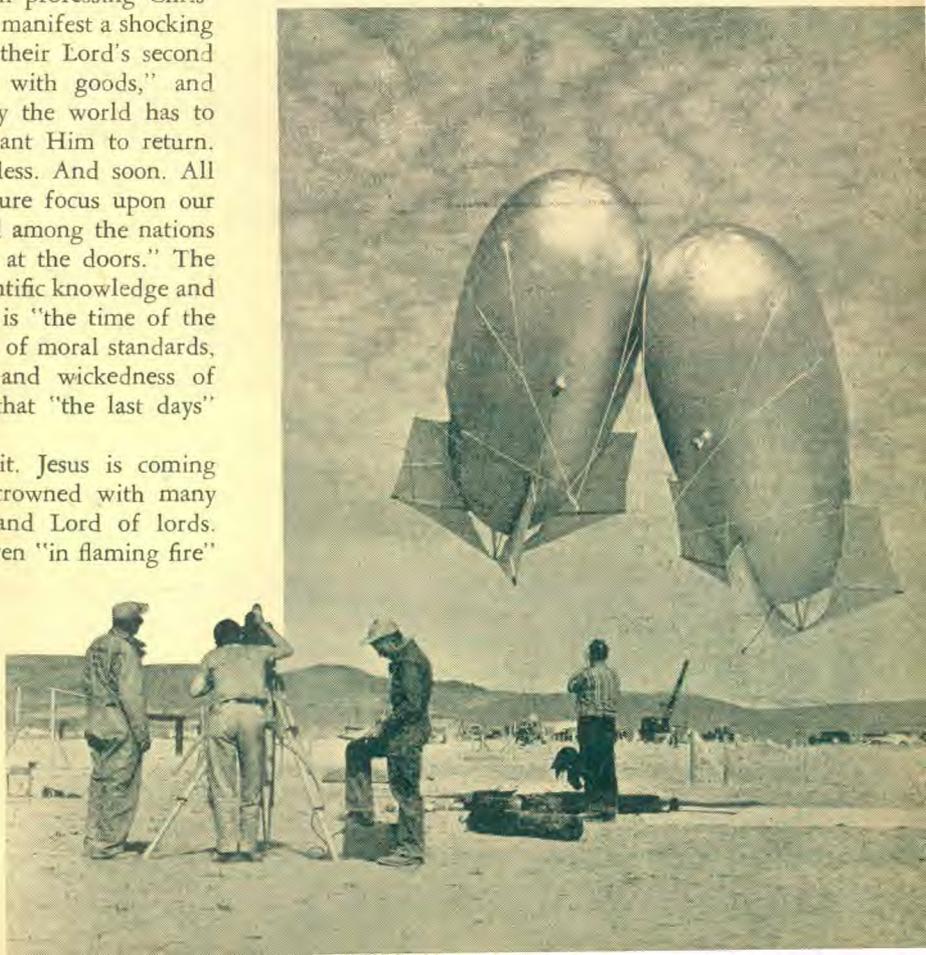
Long ago He left on record this warning for the last generation of men: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21: 34-36.

In Mark's gospel the same warning is given in these words: "Take ye heed, watch and pray:

*(Continued on page 13.)*

© Keystone  
Helium - filled "Kytoons"  
used in securing data on  
the Nevada atomic explo-  
sions.

MAY 28, 1953



# Which Was the **FIRST** **WORLD** **WAR?**

By J. A. McMillan



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"There was war in heaven," the Bible asserts.

Note the vital truths that are brought to our attention in this intriguing scripture. Two mighty Beings are engaged in deadly combat. One is called Michael. Other scriptures help us to identify Michael, whose name means, "Who is as God." The angel Gabriel calls Him "Michael, the first Prince," "Michael your prince," and "Michael . . . the great prince." Dan. 10:13 (margin), 21; 12:1.

★ WE usually think of the expression, "the First World War," as applying to the war that lasted from 1914-1918. But in actual fact, the first world war began some six thousand years ago. What is even more amazing, this war is still raging, and is even now approaching its climax and conclusion. Another astonishing fact about this first world war is that it did not begin on this earth, but in heaven.

The Apocalypse—as its name signifies—lifts the curtain that conceals the heavenly universe from our view, and reveals the nature and contestants in this mighty conflict. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Rev. 12:7-9.

Jude refers to Him as "Michael the Archangel." Jude 9. In this passage He is seen as the resurrection angel, raising "the body of Moses." Paul links this thought with the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and tells us that He shall descend from heaven . . . with the voice of the *Archangel*." 1 Thess. 4:16. It would seem clear then from these texts to identify Michael with our Lord, who raises the dead. His is the kingdom of light. The angels who fought with Him are called the angels of God. Such is the leader of the armies of heaven.

On the other side, there is the dragon. He is identified as "the Devil, and Satan." His is the kingdom of darkness. His angels are called "seducing spirits" and "the spirits of devils." Satan was himself originally an angel of light. His former name was "Lucifer, son of the morning." Isa. 14:12. He had been perfect at his creation, but cherished pride and envy which led to his undoing. He initiated a slanderous attack against the government of God among the angels of the Lord. He

aspired to the very throne of Deity. (Ezek. 28: 13-18; Isa. 14:12-17.) Such rebellion could not be tolerated in heaven, and the dragon and his angels were cast out.

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers there and then, but the universe needed to fully understand the malignant nature of Satan's principles. Only by permitting him to develop to the limit his designs and deceptions, would the entire creation of intelligent beings appreciate the destructive purposes that actuated his hostility to God and Christ. God's character was at stake and must be vindicated. Satan must therefore have the opportunity of working out his fell designs. Only thus could he be exposed. The first world war was on.

#### **The Earth a Battle-ground**

Satan, using the serpent as his medium and decoy, led our first parents into sin. From that initial venture, he has deceived the whole world. (Rev. 12:9; Isa. 14:12.) He has had one apparent advantage over God. He has not needed to stick to the truth. In fact, he "was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44. Such is the character of Satan.

Satan was not left unchallenged in the field of world conflict. To him God declared: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Gen. 3:15. The world has chosen Satan as its god and prince. (2 Cor. 4:4; John 12:31.) To contest this claim, God sent His own Son into the world to redeem the world and win it back to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. In the gospels, the character of Michael is contrasted with that of Satan. Jesus is the advocate of truth and love, Satan, the advocate of lies and hate. Jesus came to effect a threefold objective. First, to seek and to save mankind. (Luke 9:56.) He also came to expose and destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8.) And finally, He came to vindicate as well as reveal, the character of God. (John 14:9; 12:31, 32.)

Satan knew the reasons for Christ's advent and dogged His steps with malignant persistency. His master strategy was to encompass Christ's death at the hands of His own chosen people. This, he thought, would banish God's Son from this world, and leave him as undisputed master of the human race. But instead, the cross became the very fulcrum

by which Satan's reign was to be overthrown. It exposed the manslayer for what he was, a liar and murderer, and it threw into bolder relief the redeeming mercy and love of God. It exposed Satan's pride and revealed God's humility. It showed the depths and richness of the love of Christ, and revealed with awful clarity that those who follow Satan are walking the ways of death.

When Jesus, following the most severe trials and temptations, could confidently affirm, "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me," the doom of Satan was irrevocably fixed. The tragedy of the cross was revealed as the demonstration of God's love for sinful man, and Satan's hatred of all good in heaven and earth. Thus was tragedy turned to glory and there was "heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Rev. 12:10.

Another vital battle in the age-long world war had been won. Satan could no longer have access to the heavenly consistory to misrepresent mankind. (Job 1:7, 9, 11.) Instead, Jesus, our Elder Brother, "maketh intercession for us" before the throne of grace. (Rom. 8:34.) What a relief it is to know that Jesus, and not Satan, is our Advocate and representative at the right hand of God.

#### **Special Objects of Satan's Attack**

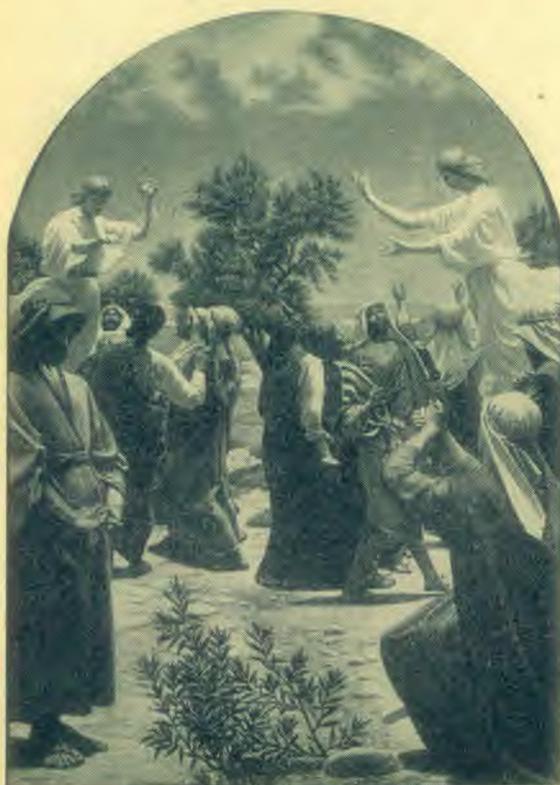
When God created man, He gave him three precious possessions to enrich and expand his experience. These three blessings were marriage, the Sabbath, and lordship or dominion. And these have been the special object of Satan's hatred and attack throughout the entire period of this first world war.

Take the case of marriage. God saw that it was "not good that the man should be alone." Gen. 2:18. Human nature craves companionship. Man, to be complete, required a complement, a help-meet. God gave man love; Satan perverted it into lust. God gave him holy wedlock; Satan perverted it into unholy deadlock. God gave man the woman to be his equal, an help-meet. Satan perverted woman's place, trampled her into slavery, and made her the plaything of pleasure. God gave man a home amid the beauties of nature. Satan has perverted this into hovels in the slums of our great cities. The sanctity of the home is the bulwark of society. Satan has divorced the parents and made delinquent the children. These are the baleful

*(Continued on page 12.)*

# Has Jesus Already Returned?

By George Elliott



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"This same Jesus, . . ." declared the angels at Christ's ascension, "shall so come . . . as ye have seen Him go."

★ Most of the world's inhabitants are now aware that a remarkable character named Jesus Christ once lived among men. A large number also firmly believe that the miracle of His epic life, death, and resurrection fully establish His claim to be the Son of God incarnate, and humanity's promised Redeemer. In the light of the commission He gave to His followers and the consummation to which it pointed (Matt. 28:19, 20), there is, therefore, one event which has the utmost scriptural and logical support. It is our Lord's express undertaking to return. Said He, "I will come again." John 14:3. Since the historic appearance of Jesus is called His first coming or "advent," His promised return is rightly termed the "second advent."

There are those who have thought that the Saviour's words could be construed into meaning

His appearing to each individual at conversion or at death. This, however, would involve a plurality of appearances, whereas the Scripture points clearly to this event as a single event at a certain definite point of time. Inspiration, in fact, very precisely defines this event as His coming "the second time." Heb. 9:28.

Almost equally as harmful to the cause of truth as a denial of the doctrine of the personal second advent of Christ, is the claim on the part of others to fix the date of the return of Jesus in spite of the fact that our Lord specifically declared that this was known only to the Father (Matt. 24:36), and that only the imminence of His return would be made known by signs in heaven and earth to the church.

Time has shown the fallacy of a succession of attempts to date the second advent and these, therefore need not be discussed, but the assertion that Christ has already invisibly returned (in 1914 one group asserts) should be considered. If this claim is valid all should know it. If it is false the error should be clearly exposed.

## Events Coinciding with Christ's Return

Surely the simplest way to prove or to disprove the allegation is to list the major events which the Scriptures foretell will take place simultaneously with the second advent. For if those things which are to accompany His appearing have not yet occurred, then how can He be said to have appeared?

The first feature to observe is the climactic nature of Christ's return. In the Bible His "coming" is plainly bracketed with "the end of the world." Matt. 24:3. Elsewhere the Scriptures tell of a final harvest of souls in which the rôle of chief Reaper is assumed by the returning Lord. (Rev. 14:14-20.) Obviously, when these events take place things cannot possibly continue as they were before. Both the righteous and the wicked will be effectively dealt with by the coming Judge. "Then He shall reward every man according to his works." Matt. 16:27. At this time the mighty Life-giver intends to resurrect the righteous dead

of all past ages. "The dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16), followed by the instantaneous "change" of all Christ's subjects then living, into a glorified state of immortality. (Verse 17; 1 Cor. 15:51-54.)

Equally decisive will be the fate of the hosts of the unrepentant. At Christ's coming He will proceed at once to "gather out of His kingdom all things that offend." Matt. 13:41. "The Lord cometh . . . to execute judgment upon all . . . that are ungodly." Jude 14, 15. To all "that obey not the Gospel" there is to come the "vengeance" of a just God whose patience has at last ceased, and upon whom Christ visits "destruction." (2 Thess. 1:8, 9; Isa. 26:21.)

Now can anyone really assert that this stupendous and world-wide phenomenon has yet taken place? Yet it all must happen when our Lord appears.

#### The Manner of His Coming

Admittedly, the apostle Peter declares that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." 2 Peter 3:10. But note that it is the day which is said to come like a thief, not the Lord! The dissolution of the firmament which heralds our Lord's approach is anything but unobtrusive. (Verse 10, last part.) This illustration is used here as elsewhere to stress the danger of unpreparedness. (Verse 14; 1 Thess. 5:2-4.) The issue as to whether Jesus is to return visibly or invisibly does not here arise. But it is made abundantly clear by those angel watchers who witnessed Christ's ascension. To the disciples they testified: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11. He went visibly and He will return visibly.

In the day of "His glorious appearing" the promise is that "every eye shall see Him." Rev. 1:7. All the faithful are to "see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2. The brilliance of His presence as He now is may be gathered from its effect upon John the Revelator. (Rev. 1:13, 16, 17.) It will terrify the wicked, for "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:30; Rev. 6:14-17. Can any human mind visualize "the brightness of His coming" in which will be blended His own glory, the glory of God the Father, and of legions of attendant angels? (Matt. 16:27; 25:31.) Are not all these luminous passages of Holy Writ a challenge to every false theory, proving conclusively

that so far our blessed Lord, albeit very near, has not yet returned to do what He is then to do?

#### The Danger of Erroneous Ideas

It may be thought that if some choose to foster or to teach a false conception of the second advent, little harm can come of it apart from the folly it involves. Such, however, is not the case. There is a remarkable precedent in the experience of the early church.

Taught to cherish the truth of an ultimate resurrection, it is not difficult to credit the result when some false prophets declared: "The resurrection is past already." It "overthrew the faith of some." 2 Tim. 2:18. Similarly the setting and passing of dates for the second advent has overthrown the faith of many.

Equally grave is the danger of honest souls being deceived by an impostor, counterfeiting the return of Jesus. The Saviour actually warned: "There shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders." Matt. 24:24. Thus the notion that Jesus has returned invisibly, and is now present in person, assumes the most sinister significance, for any man or devil who can shine and do exploits can make out a plausible case of messiahship.

Our safeguard lies in an understanding of the essential features of the Lord's genuine appearance. "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, . . . believe it not." Why? "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:23, 27. Such a blaze of celestial splendour will be impossible to counterfeit and impossible to mistake. The true avenue of Christ's approach has been made known by the Father. We are to "wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:10), "from whence also we look for the Saviour." Phil. 3:20. There is no cause for any to be misled at all by any purported revelation of Christ upon the earth, for the Scripture says expressly: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." 2 Thess. 1:7. Hence the exhortation to "look up." Luke 21:28.

The menace of counterfeit christs to be manifested upon the earth gives a peculiar significance to the predicted words of God's people when at last they shall view His glorious person in the clouds of heaven: "Lo, *this* is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isa. 25:9. May all who "look for" Him hold fast to the protective knowledge of this climactic event as recorded for us in His Word.

★ IN previous studies we have seen how, in the beginning, our first parents received life from God and became "living souls" (Gen. 1:27; 2:7), how, through the tragedy of sin, that life was forfeited, and finally, how God in His mercy provided a wonderful way of redemption, new and eternal life being offered to man through Christ and by resurrection from the dead.

It now only remains for us to consider the fate of the rejectors of the mercy of God, who, as we have already discovered, will be raised in the "second resurrection" or "resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29) to hear and receive the just sentence of God.

The teaching of the Bible is clear and simple. In the twentieth chapter of the Revelation the scene before the "great white throne" of final judgment is strikingly depicted: "And I saw," says the Revelator, "a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Rev. 20:11-15.

Thus, according to the inspired Record, all will be divided at the last into two classes, those who "shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:11), on whom "the second death hath no power" (Rev. 20:6), and those who, having judged themselves "unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13:46), will be destroyed in this "second death" by the consuming flames of the wrath of God.

Now we have seen that in the first death man would have "gone to nothing" but for the provision made through Christ. The second death, therefore, from which there is no provision for recovery or return, must involve utter and irrevocable annihilation. And this conclusion is supported by a wealth of testimony from almost every book of both Old and New Testaments.

#### Utter Destruction of the Wicked

"The wicked," says the Psalmist, "shall *perish*." Psa. 37:20. And with him agrees the gospel writer John (John 3:15, 16; 10:28), Paul (Rom. 2:12;

# Will Sinners

Final article in the series "Life Only Through Christ"

1 Cor. 1:18; 15:18; 2 Cor. 2:15; 2 Thess. 2:10), Peter (2 Peter 2:12; 3:9), and Jesus Himself (Matt. 5:30; Luke 13:3, 5).

By a variety of vivid illustrations this utter destruction is further emphasized. They will be dashed "in pieces [literally to shivers] like a potter's vessel." Psa. 2:9. (See also Job 34:24; Isa. 8:15; Rev. 2:27.) They will be ground to powder. (Matt. 21:44; Luke 20:18; Dan. 2:44.) Their light will be extinguished (Job 18:5; 21:17; Prov. 20:20; 24:20; Isa. 43:17.) "Into smoke shall they consume away." Psa. 37:20.

So complete will this destruction be that, adds the Psalmist, "the wicked *shall not be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*. . . . He passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found" (Psa. 37:10, 36), for they will "be no more." Psa. 104:35.

Even their name and memory will be forgotten in the eternal years: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Psa. 34:16. "Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever." Psa. 9:5. "They shall be as though they had not been." Obad. 16.

#### An Irrevocable Fate

Finally, we have a whole series of inspired statements that this annihilation will be eternal in its effects.



# ...rn For Ever?

By

W. L. Emmerson

For them the "mist of darkness is reserved for ever." 2 Peter 2:17.

They will "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." 2 Thess. 1:9.

"It is certain," says Edward White, "that the Hebrew language has no stronger terms to express a *ceasing to be*—what we call *annihilation*—than those used respecting the fate of the wicked."—*Life in Christ*, page 386.

"In the same way," he continues, "we are . . . able to state, concerning the Greek, what we have said concerning the Hebrew, that the authors of the Greek New Testament have used the strongest

terms at their command, to assert a total extinction of both evil and evil-doers."—*Life in Christ*, page 387.

## Satan's Culminating Deception

At every previous stage in our investigation we have discovered Satan opposing the truth of God with variations on his original lie, "Ye shall not surely die." It is not surprising, therefore, that at this final stage he seeks to foist upon unwary minds his culminating deception. Those whom he has been unable to hold in his grasp by other means he determines to frighten into his power by blackening the character of God and declaring that He intends to condemn those of whom He disapproves to horrible torment for ever and ever!

"Thus," says E. G. White, "the arch-fiend

clothes with his own attributes the Creator and Benefactor of mankind. . . . Thus he succeeds in luring souls away from their allegiance to God."—*The Great Controversy*, page 535.

It is an evidence of the truly biblical belief of the early church that there is no mention of torment in the earliest apostolic fathers like Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Irenaeus, and Polycrates; and in the earliest Christian art in the catacombs and elsewhere there are no representations of the sufferings of hell. But by the beginning of the third century of the Christian era we find the idea of survival in death taking hold of the thinking of the Christian church and with it the doctrine of the eternal torment of the wicked.

Tertullian (A.D. 200-220) was the first of the church fathers in whose writings the torments of hell become prominent. "The fire of hell will burn yet not consume, like the fire of volcanoes," he says in his *Apologia* (Sec. 48).

In similar vein declared Clement of Alexandria: "Immortal are all souls, even those of the wicked, for whom it had been better not to have been incorruptible; for punished by limitless infliction of unquenchable fire, and dying not, they obtain no end of their misery."—Quoted by Neander in *History of Christian Dogmas*, page 254. (Bohn's trans.)

This God-dishonouring doctrine and travesty of truth was built permanently into the church by the Roman apostasy, which made precisely the same use of the terrors of hell for winning and holding converts to itself as did the priests of the ancient mystery religions.

"Lurid descriptions of hell," says Canon F. Rogers, "were prominent in the teaching of the Friars."—*The Fear of Hell*, page 69.

## Reformation Fails to Expunge Eternal Torment Doctrine

In the reformation of the sixteenth and later centuries, the falsity of the Roman Catholic teaching on the eternal torment of the wicked was recognized, and many like Tyndale, Milton, Luther, Jeremy Taylor, and many others abandoned it in favour of the pure teaching of the Word of God.

Sad to say, however, it was perpetuated by the powerful teacher Calvin and has returned through Calvinistic influence also to some other churches claiming to be staunchly Protestant. That Canon F. Rogers is right in declaring Jonathan Edwards "the classic exponent of the Puritan doctrine of hell-fire" is surely evident when we read his lurid

descriptions of "the God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire."—*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, a sermon preached at Enfield, July 8, 1741.

#### Marred Witness of Great Evangelists

Unfortunately, some of the great Protestant evangelists of last century inherited this terrible teaching and—inconceivable as it may seem—used it to frighten sinners into accepting the grace of God through Christ!

Spurgeon wrote: "Only conceive that poor wretch in the flames, who is saying, 'O for one drop of water to cool my parched tongue!' See how his tongue hangs from between his blistered lips! How it excoriates and burns the roof of his mouth as if it were a firebrand! . . . Suffice it for me to close up by saying that the hell of hells will be to thee, poor sinner, the thought that it is to be for ever."—*Sermon preached in 1855*.

Even the good and gentle Isaac Watts wrote such lines in his *Moral Songs for Children* (1715) as:

"There is a dreadful hell  
And everlasting pains;  
There sinners must with devils dwell  
In darkness, fire, and chains."

#### Supposed Bible Authority for Doctrine

Obviously these great and good men would not have held on to this doctrine unless they had been led to believe that it was supported by scriptural proof, but Satan is well able to strain an "It is written" to suit his purpose and delude the unwary.

But the Word of God does not contradict itself and every Bible argument for the eternal torment of the wicked will prove, when carefully investigated, to be a wresting of the Scriptures.

On several occasions Jesus spoke of "everlasting" punishment and His remarks have been construed by some to imply eternal torment. In describing the fate of the wicked He says, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." Matt. 25:46. Just a few verses prior to this He makes known the sentence which He will pronounce upon those who reject His offer of mercy. "Depart from Me," He will say, "ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25:41.

On still another occasion Jesus exhorted: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall

be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Mark 9:43, 44.

Two or three points in connection with these statements will quickly dispose of any suggestion that here Jesus was teaching the eternal torment of the wicked. In the first place, "eternal punishment" does not mean the same as "eternal punishing," for their punishment will be utter and irrevocable annihilation. The word used for punishment is *kolasis* which literally means "cutting off." To be "everlastingly cut off" can mean nothing other than everlasting deprivation of life, everlasting exclusion from the presence of God.

#### "Unquenchable Fire" and Worms that "Die Not"

The second point to note is that everlasting and unquenchable fire is not some absolutely unique kind of fire which tortures without destroying. No-one has any experience of or can imagine such fire.

These expressions are akin to that in Jeremiah 17:27 where God threatens "fire" that "shall not be quenched" upon Jerusalem for continued apostasy.

This punishment was fulfilled when the fires of destruction burned up the city after its sacking by Nebuchadnezzar and then, when there was nothing left to burn, went out for lack of fuel for the fire. (2 Chron. 36:19, 21.)

Jude uses the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah as another illustration of "the vengeance of eternal fire." Jude 7. These cities are not burning still any more than Jerusalem is. The fires have gone out. But being lit by divine wrath they could not have been put out until they had fully accomplished the destruction determined by God. This is the literal meaning of the expression *pur asbeston*, namely, "such a fire as cannot be extinguished before it has consumed and destroyed all."

A similar interpretation is to be placed upon the reference to the "worm" that "dieth not" (Mark 9:43, 44) which feeds upon the carcasses of the wicked.

In the earthly Ge-Hinnon, or Valley of Hinnon, beyond the south wall of Jerusalem, what the fires failed to destroy was consumed by the worms which swarmed over the refuse heaps. These carcasses did not provide a never-failing supply of food for the worms, nor will the bodies of the wicked be miraculously preserved—and that in a living state—to be continually preyed upon by worms through all eternity. The carcasses

(Continued on page 13.)

# SPIRITUALISM IN THE FORCES

By R. T. Bolton

★ It may come as a surprise to many devoted Christians to learn that permission was recently granted to hold a Spiritualist meeting and séance at an R.A.F. Station in Gloucester. The *Psychic News* gave prominence to this event with a heading on its front page reading "Spiritualist Meeting at R.A.F. Station. No Opposition Since Dowding's Question in Lords." On an inside page there is a further heading which reads, "Propaganda Plan for the Services."

Christians cannot but be disturbed by this announcement and the evident jubilation of Spiritualists, knowing as they do the nature and source of Spiritualist doctrine.

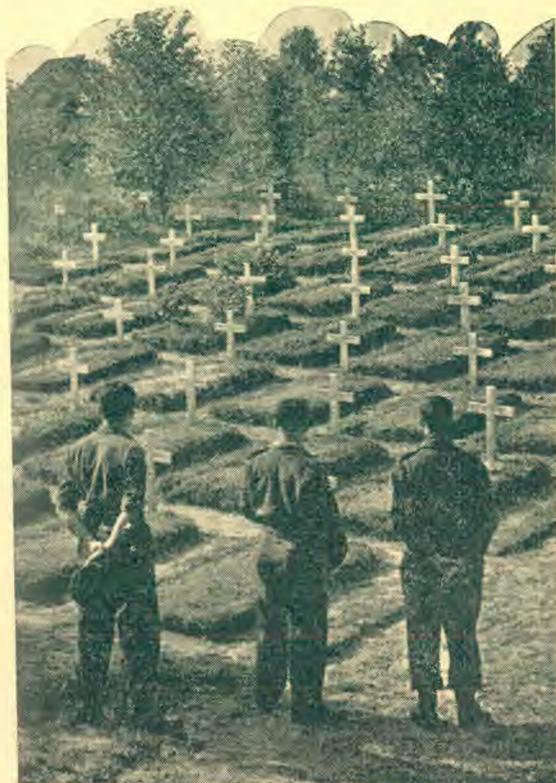
## A New Battle of Britain

Another battle of Britain is now being fought, not in the air but by the "prince of the power of the air," not in the realm of material things, but in the realm of the spirit.

From the report in the *Psychic News* it would appear that our young Service men were subjected to a frontal attack by supposed disembodied spirits, who used their supernatural powers to fascinate and delude utterly unsophisticated minds for it is stated "that at least ninety-five per cent of the audience were experiencing such a demonstration for the first time." We are told that the medium "created a deep impression on them, and some of the Air Force lads sat up until one o'clock next morning discussing the events."

Seemingly a Service Psychic League has also recently been formed and the *Psychic News* states that its purpose is to "forge ahead with a vigorous policy of spreading the truth of survival among the Forces."

Be it far from us to decry the efforts of others merely because they differ doctrinally from us, but when we see a movement seeking to inculcate the doctrine of the survival of the spirit of man after death by the invocation of familiar spirits against which every child of God is warned, we cannot but sound the alarm. "Regard not them that have familiar spirits," is the plain exhorta-



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A British war cemetery at Luneburg, Germany.

tion of Scripture, "neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God." Lev. 19:31. (See also Leviticus 20:27.)

This doctrine of survival is a modern attempt to prove that the words spoken by the serpent to Eve "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4) are true and, by implication, that the words of the Creator are a lie.

It is said that if you repeat a lie enough times you can ultimately persuade people to believe that it is true. Through Spiritualism this lie is repeated over and over again and its truth is allegedly demonstrated in the séance with the result that many are persuaded to believe the lie of survival.

## Try the Spirits

There is no need for anyone to be in the dark about the nature of Spiritualism. On the authority of the Word of God we know that there are in this world good and evil spirits or angels and it

should not be hard to discern between the good and the evil because we are given two reliable tests: "To the law and to the testimony" (Isa. 8:20), and, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7:20.

Let us apply this test to the séance held at the R.A.F. station at Gloucester. We can do this, as a fairly full report is given in the *Psychic News*. We learn that one reservist, had an invisible blue scar of which the medium revealed a knowledge. A corporal in the W.R.A.F. was told by the medium that a friend of hers had died from internal trouble, that her father had a scar over the left eye, that she was to be married shortly, and that she would be attending a wedding at Easter. We are informed that all these facts were corroborated while further trivialities of this nature were made known to others.

Obviously these revelations had but one purpose, to purport to prove the survival of the spirits of the dead and show their knowledgeableness.

Now the Scripture says: "For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." Eccles. 9:5, 6. Since the dead know nothing and have nothing to do with anything that is done on this earth, the spirit which made these revelations was a lying spirit. It surely goes without saying that no good spirit would stoop to such banalities as made up this meeting.

Assuredly we do believe in survival at the resurrection as Christ has said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. The apostle Paul further adds: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God." Rom. 2:6-11.

However, we do say, on the authority of the Scriptures, that there is no such thing as the spirits of the dead passing over to some higher realm and having power to communicate with us.

What then are these supernatural revelations? The answer is plain. If they are not the spirits of dead men, then they must be evil spirits impersonating the dead, and hence the positive warning: "Regard not them that have familiar spirits."

Let our Service men understand these things and shut their eyes and ears to this spiritualistic propaganda to which it seems they will now be subject. Let them turn not to "the dead" who "know not any thing," but to Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

## Which Was the First World War?

*(Continued from page 5.)*

fruits of that subtle mind which deceiveth the whole world.

As the home is the centre of society, so is the Sabbath the centre of worship. It was enshrined in the heart of God's law as a safeguard against man's tendency to forget his Maker. (Exod. 20:8-11; Deut. 6:12.) Had the Sabbath of the Lord been faithfully observed throughout the centuries, there would never have arisen a single atheist, agnostic, or evolutionist. The Lord's day is a weekly sanctuary from the materialism of the work-a-day world. God's holy day is a call to "worship the Father in Spirit and in truth."

It would be surprising if Satan had left unmolested, this weekly reminder of God's creation and Eden lost. And Bible history shows that he persistently led Israel to forget God and pollute His Sabbath day. (Ezek. 20:21.) The people, the priests, the princes and the prophets were all involved in this perversion of God's law and neglect of God's day. (Ezek. 22:24-29.) But always, there was a faithful remnant who remained true to God and kept His commandments. (Isa. 56:1-7.)

Satan then inspired his vicegerent to change God's law and His sacred times, so that the original reason for observing it would be obscured and a substitute day be accepted in its stead. (Dan. 7:25.) In the final phases of his warfare against righteousness, Satan will cause his henchmen to coerce mankind to spurn God's law and His day of remembrance, and accept his "mark." Rev. 13:14-17. Arrayed on God's

side will be the remnant seed of the woman of Genesis 3:15, who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. (Rev. 12:17; 14:12.) Such will be the thrilling episode that ushers in the final conflict and the ultimate triumph of truth and divine love implanted in human hearts.

When man was placed in the midst of all the created beings, in the garden east of Eden, the Lord gave him to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Gen. 1:28. This lordship is noted by the Psalmist in the following words: "Thou madest him to have dominion." Psa. 8:6. Under the kingly sway of reason, man was to enjoy and exercise self-control. Because of sin, this dominion was lost. Yet man is conscious of his lost birthright. Satan has perverted this, and so men through the ages have schemed, fought, and killed in a mad lust for power over their fellows. The more men have lost control over their own appetites and passions, the more they have laboured to usurp authority over others. Our day is to see the last attempt to wrest power from God and vest it in wicked men and evil spirits.

#### The Culminating Conflict

The stage is being set and the contestants are arming to the teeth. John was shown the forces instigating this mighty conflict. "And I saw three unclean spirits, . . . for they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God almighty." Rev. 16:13, 14. This is the war to end war. Jesus declares: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments." Rev. 16:15. At that time, all the forces of evil will be irrevocably overthrown. Both root and branch of wickedness will be burned up. The fires of God's judgment will devour the devil and his angels and purify the universe of sin. (Mal. 4:1; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:9.)

In every human heart, this controversy between Christ and Satan is being enacted. Satan designs

to wreck our homes, destroy our worship of God, and bring us under bondage to sin. Christ wishes to bless our homes, inspire our worship in love, and lead us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. For our allegiance, these two great contestants are voting. Satan is voting against you, Christ is voting for you, but you have the casting vote. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:10, 11.

### Be Ready!

*(Continued from page 3.)*

for ye know not when the time is. . . Watch ye therefore . . . lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping." Mark 13:33-36.

Watch and pray! This is His counsel as the time draws near. Are you watching for His coming? Are you praying that He will remove all unrighteousness from your life, every evil thought from your mind, that you may stand before Him "without spot or blemish" in that day?

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:44.

### Will Sinners Burn for Ever?

*(Continued from page 10.)*

in Ge-Hinnon were consumed by the fire and the worms and so will be the carcasses of the wicked in the final judgment. And when they are utterly consumed, the worms, like the fire, will have fulfilled their purpose.

#### "Smoke of Torment"

In the book of Revelation, describing the fate of those who give their loyalty to Satan and his last-day agents, the Revelator says: "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who

*(Continued on back page.)*

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# THE CHILDREN'S



# Pages

## A Cure for Johnny

By Eirene Adair

JOHNNY CONROY was one of those children with a strange streak of cruelty in them, who delight in being unkind to small animals.

It was quite usual to see Johnny tying cans to puppies' tails, and laughing at their discomfort; or throwing things at cats, or catapulting small stones at little birds.

Johnny's unkind behaviour

troubled his parents, who had always told him that he should be kind to all creatures. They reminded him that God had made them all and He cared for even the smallest birds.

But sad to say, they lived in a neighbourhood where there were a great many big, rough boys, and Johnny thought it was good fun to follow their example and do naughty things.

At home they had a pretty little black kitten called Fluffy, and Johnny sometimes teased it, by tying its paws together, or perhaps by tying its tail to the table, or shutting it up in a little cupboard beside the fireplace. Mummy and Daddy had both scolded and smacked. They told him that one day Fluffy would probably scratch him badly if he didn't stop annoying her. But so far, Fluffy just tried to hide whenever she saw Johnny coming near her.

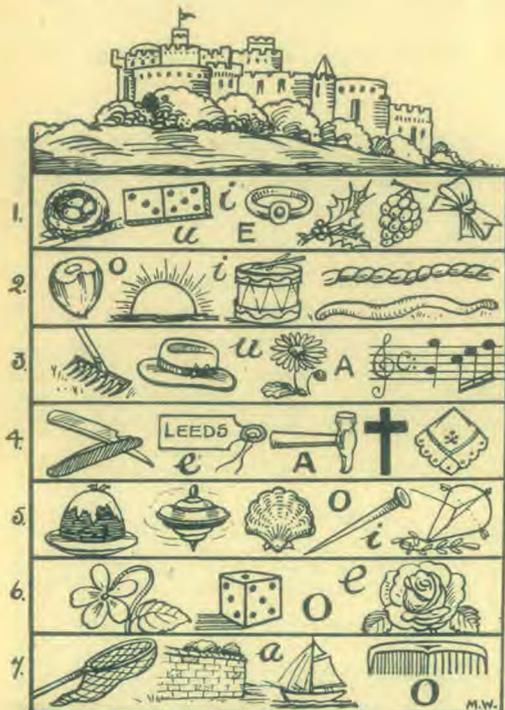
One evening, after spending half an hour teasing poor Fluffy, he lay down on the rug before the bright fire and fell into a doze. But, oh my! Master Johnny did have a nasty nightmare and I really think it taught him a good lesson, for he never was so cruel to little animals afterward.

Johnny received a terrible shock when he seemed to see a great big tiger standing beside him staring straight at him with its glowing eyes. He just couldn't stir or call his mummy, as he was so frightened. He didn't know what to do. He had heard stories of how tigers could eat men, even big men like his daddy, and one day he had been to the zoo and seen tigers in cages. They had roared so loudly that he was glad Daddy was beside him to hold his hand, even though there were bars between the tigers and the watchers.

Then a very strange thing happened! The tiger padded up close beside him; it didn't attempt to eat him as he feared, but it caught him by the jersey in its big, sharp teeth, put him in the little cupboard, and shut the door.

Oh, it was terribly dark, and Johnny felt so afraid. How he wished his mummy or daddy would come and rescue him, but they must have been busy in some other part of the house.

After a very long time it seemed the cupboard door opened, and a big paw caught



How clever are you? These are jumbled names of seven British castles. Find what they are by using the first letter of each object together with the letters which are written in. For instance, No. 1 is Edinburgh. List your answers, neatly paint the castle, and send with your name, age, and address, to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than June 11th.

him by the arm and pulled him out onto the hearth rug once more and the big tiger began to "play" with him just as he had "played" with Fluffy, but it didn't seem such fun to him now.

The tiger then picked up a ribbon which was on one of the chairs, and started tying it round Johnny's neck as Johnny had tied it round Fluffy's—and there was Fluffy sitting on the hearthstone purring away as if she was very pleased with these

you'd been sleeping already." "Oh, Mummy," cried Johnny, "I was asleep, and I had a terrible dream." He then told his mummy all about the tiger, and ended his tale by saying earnestly: "Anyway, I've really learned a lesson, Mummy, and I'll never be cruel to animals again. I didn't know it hurt them and frightened them so much."

"I'm glad to hear that, Johnny," answered his mummy. "Animals are our friends and we should always be kind to them. God made them all, and it grieves Him when we injure them to amuse ourselves—always remember that, dear."

"I will, Mummy," replied Johnny; and I think he really meant it.

# THE Sunbeams' CORNER



## MY WISH

I want to do the things I know that Thou wouldst have me do;  
I want to speak the words I know are always pure and true;  
I want to walk the way I know my Saviour's feet have trod,  
With every little thing I see, reminding me of God.

I want to feel that every day He's there just by my side,  
On every little path I tread my wandering steps to guide,  
I want to know that in the things I fail to understand,  
It is Thy will, and only what Thy gracious love has planned.

I want to know I'm in Thy hands, and leave the rest to Thee,  
To make and mould me just as Thou wouldst really have me be,  
I know I have a Friend in Thee that's perfect from the start,  
For in my life Thy love alone, has thrilled and won my heart.

Pamela Jones.

strange happenings. Tighter and tighter became the ribbon! Johnny gave a gasp—and he awoke!

He gazed all around the room fearfully, but there was no tiger to be seen. Gradually it dawned upon him that he had been having a bad dream, and he sighed with relief that there was no real tiger near him at all.

Just then the door opened, and Mummy came in with Fluffy gambolling at her heels.

"Time for bed, Johnny boy," she said. "Why, you look as if

## Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

I HOPE you won't find our "castle" puzzle too hard this time. It may help if I tell you that numbers 2 and 6 are in South England, numbers 3 and 5 in North England, and numbers 4 and 7 in Wales.

Castles are grand places, aren't they? with their mighty turrets, and battlements, their great walls and moats.

When people get big and impossible ideas of what they want to do, or where they want to go, we sometimes say that they are "building castles in the air."

Yet I hope you all have "big ideas" of what you want to do and where you want to go. The "biggest" thing to do, is to serve God. The "biggest" place to go to, is heaven with its mansions.

Someone has said that we should "build castles in the air," and then be sure to put a foundation under them. This we can do by trusting Jesus every day. Paul said: "I can do all things through Christ." He will help us to do really "big" things in this world, and will one day take us to our heavenly castle "in the air."

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE MARGARET.

## Results of Competition No. 7

Prize-winners.—Valerie Banks, 108 Park Avenue, Bushey, Herts. Age 10;

Glenys Simpson, 67 Ainsbury Road, Coventry. Age 8.

*Honourable Mention.*—Jilda Sleeman (Torquay); Trevor Goddard (Iver); Elaine Bunker (Tavistock); Margaret Gravenall (Norwich); Stuart Payne (Woodmancote); Heather Payne (Woodmancote); Margaret Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Anthony Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Cora Blundell (Binfield); Margaret Johnson (Rochester); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Antony Dell (Upper Beeding); Colin Doggett (Norwich); Pamela Walker (Liverpool, 4); Eleonora Baron (Church); Siegfried Baron (Church); No Name (?).

*Those who tried hard.*—Nancy Hazelwood (Kings Langley); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Adrienne Edwards (Torquay); Hazel Norris (Southend-on-Sea); Christine Brown (Stoke-on-Trent); Vincent Reed (Cardiff); Janet Bishop (Bristol, 3); Valerie Turner (Manchester, 15); Janette Busby (Birmingham, 20); Leon Maile (Huntingdon); James Sparkes (London, S.W.4); Roger Outley (Ryde, I.O.W.); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Myrtle Green (Salisbury); Veronica Laws (Greenock); Brenda Milner (Coventry); Ann Dell (Upper Beeding); Joseph Cartwright (Wolstanton); Richard Payne (Woodmancote); Irene Turner (Coventry); Margaret Roberts (Shelton); Nigel Payne (Woodmancote).

## The Bible and OUR TIMES

(Formerly "Present Truth")

Vol. 69, No. 11. Price 3d.

Printed and published in Great Britain fortnightly on Thursday by

THE STANBOROUGH PRESS LTD., WATFORD, HERTS.

EDITOR: W. L. EMMERSON

Twelve months ..... 9/9 post free

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# Straws in the Wind

## More Food Wanted

"WORLD food production has increased only nine per cent in the past thirteen years," said George Mulgrue in a recent broadcast, "whereas the population has increased by about thirteen per cent. Every day there are 75,000 additional people in the world. 75,000 people need a good deal of food. To keep level on the rather poor standard of nutrition that we have—with two-thirds going hungry—we must produce, by 1960, ninety per cent more than we produced in 1946.

## Prison Population Rising Steeply

"THERE are nearly 25,000 people in prison and Borstal in England and Wales at the present time," asserted Dr. W. E. Sangster, president of the Methodist Church, in a sermon in London. "In some prisons they are sleeping three in a cell. The contrast with the pre-war period is informative. In 1938 the number of prisoners received was 15,145; in 1950 it was 24,235. Is it only a coincidence," he added, "that the generation which saw the churches empty saw the prisons full?"

## Will Sinners Burn for Ever?

(Continued from page 13.)

worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Rev. 14:11.

This everlastingly ascending smoke, which is alleged to imply the eternal torment of these great sinners, is identical with a metaphor taken from

the Old Testament descriptive of the fate of Idumea. Edom is not still smoking to-day. The expression, therefore, when applied to the fate of the wicked, whether in the past or the future, cannot mean the everlasting smoking of indestructible sinners. It simply suggests that as long as the destruction continues the smoke will testify to the continuing operation of the destroying fires. And when there is nothing left to destroy, both the fire and the smoke will cease, though their effects will endure "for ever and ever."

That there will be degrees of punishment before the final destruction of the wicked is indicated by the statement that some will be beaten with "few stripes" and some with "many" (Luke 12:47, 48), but this is not at all out of harmony with the multiplicity of biblical statements categorically declaring the ultimate annihilation of the wicked.

## Only One "Way Everlasting"

John the Baptist was thus stating a plain and simple truth when he declared: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." John 3:26. (See also John 5:40; Acts 13:46; 1 John 3:15; 5:12.)

There is only one "way everlasting" and that is the way which leads past the cross to new life in Christ and there is only one Guide who can direct us into that way—He who Himself is the "Way," "the Resurrection and the Life."

Well, therefore, may we, with the Psalmist, ask of Him: "Lead me in the way everlasting." Psa. 139:24.

