



THE BIBLE AND

OUR TIMES

What Is The Christian Hope?

By Arthur S. Maxwell

★ EVER since the World Council of Churches decided to make "The Christian Hope" the theme of its 1954 General Assembly, the religious press has been filled with discussion of the subject. Never in the history of Christendom has it received such world-wide consideration.

This has come about largely because many Christian people have found themselves facing a dilemma. Subconsciously and somewhat vaguely they have always believed in a "Christian hope," but they have never been quite sure what it is. It has been a nice, pious sentiment without any particular meaning. Now they are compelled to define it.

As discussion has developed a line of cleavage has appeared between those who believe that the "blessed hope" is nothing other than the imminent, personal return of Christ in power and glory, and those who hold that it is merely the improvement of society through the effect of Christ's teachings upon the hearts of men. Between the two groups, which broadly represent "conservative" and "liberal" thinking in the church, there has been a good deal of heated debate, which is still proceeding.

Best of Both Worlds

Some writers are now trying to blend the two hopes, saying that perhaps both views have elements of truth.



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The second advent of Christ is appearing with increasing frequency upon the agendas of church councils on both sides of the Atlantic.

In a recent issue of the *Christian Century*—which has been strongly opposed to any literal second advent—William Hordern expresses the thought that the Christian hope might possibly be both a hope for "here" and "hereafter"—"here" referring to this world and "hereafter" to the afterlife and/or the second coming of Christ.

"It is entirely proper," he says, "for a Christian to look hopefully beyond the world of space and

time. The ultimate basis of the Christian Gospel is the faith that God has resources which are not exhausted by the history of this earth." Again: "The Christian God and the Christian ethic will both disappear if we do not hold fast to the otherworldly portion of our Christian hope, and to the faith that it applies to those who have lived in the past as well as to the generations that are to inherit the future. . . . The Apocalypse is a symbolic representation of the legitimate faith that history has a meaning and is moving, under God, toward a goal in which man shall achieve his noblest aims and hopes."

This is a long way for a liberal to go—and it is as far as he does go in this direction. For then he emphasizes what he sees as another "facet" of the Christian hope, "that under the impact of Jesus Christ earthly society may be made more just." On this point he argues fluently that because Christianity can change men's lives it can "through those changed lives . . . change the society in which men live." "Real progress is still a social possibility," he claims, pointing to Christianity's notable achievements in ending "infanticide and chattel slavery," in raising the status of women, and in filling men with concern for "the sick, the starving, the uneducated, and the homeless."

From this he concludes that "the Christian hope is both otherworldly and this-worldly." And he has a point. We believe this, too, though we would state it in different terms.

The Bible "Hope"

In our opinion, based we believe upon the solid testimony of all the writers of the New Testament, the Christian hope is primarily the return in glory and power of Jesus Christ, crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. As the apostle Paul wrote, it is "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13. It is the literal, personal coming of "this same Jesus" (Acts 1:11), with "the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." 1 Thess. 4:16.

This is the hope that Jesus Himself expressed when He told the high priest: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64), and when He told His disciples that "all the tribes of the earth" shall one day "see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:30.

To deny Christ's literal return is to deny not only what He Himself said, but also what the Bible says will be the consummation of the plan

of salvation. Minimizing or ignoring His glorious second advent is to set aside all the prophecies of the Bible which focus on this event as the climax of history and the triumph of Christ over the powers of evil He died to vanquish.

If We Have This "Hope"

Unquestionably the second advent is the Christian hope. However, we gladly admit that it has many "facets." The apostle John tells us, for instance, that he "that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3. Belief in Christ's second advent acts as a cleansing agent in the hearts of men.

"He that hath this hope" also becomes a zealous missionary, filled with ardour for the cause of Christ. Eager for the salvation of others, he unites with that faithful band of witnesses who have "the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." Rev. 14:6, 7.

The noble lives of these consecrated, devoted servants of God, and of all who heed their message, are a blessing to the communities in which they live. Of course. Where they are numerous, or even in the majority, there is little need of a police force, a grand jury, or a divorce court. Their love for Christ and their hope in His soon return automatically makes them the best possible citizens. But they never lose sight of the fact that they are part of a plan—God's plan—and that this plan calls for Christ's return in glory as its most important and culminating event.

Christians should understand once and for all that they are not going to convert the world. Christ never expected them to. (Matt. 24:14.) If they were to try for a hundred million years, they would never succeed in doing so. If this were the Christian hope it would be a slim hope indeed.

Christians are to teach, to warn, to persuade, to plead, but they will never take over the government of nations. Christ will do that. They must witness; He must reign. This is the one sure hope.



ACCORDING to Dr. Laubach three-fifths of the people in the world cannot read or sign their name and another fifth can read very little. Though knowing only three languages himself, he has been instrumental in producing literacy training courses in 238 languages, and has helped sixty million people to read.



By T. K. Martin

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The Bible portrays Satan as a high angel who fell through pride.

★ How wonderfully mysterious life seems to a child! Every day it whispers a new secret in his ears and thrills him with new excitement at every turn. As he grows older he finds that the things which once came to him with sensational surprise have less attraction. He knows now how they happen. With open-mouthed awe, he once watched a train steam into a station, or saw a telephone switchboard. But when he found out that there was reason and cause behind everything the wistfulness disappeared. He learned the simple rule that there must be a cause to account for every effect.

We witness so much evil and suffering in our little world. Crimes that shock us and accidents

Is There A PERSONAL DEVIL?

By E. W. H. Vick

that horrify us are met with almost every day. Can one believe that there is no real cause behind it all? The very way that wickedness comes about seems to suggest shrewd, intelligent, purposeful albeit evil planning somewhere in the shadows. Because we do not see it does not make it any the less real.

If we will take the trouble to read, the Bible will explain it for us. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Rev. 12:12.

The Devil is Backstage

The devil is backstage, trying to make life a tragedy. I am glad that the Bible speaks so plainly about this, because otherwise I am sure we would be at a loss to know how to explain where all the sin and ugliness and disaster comes from. The Bible says simply that the devil is responsible.

That the devil is a real being is clear from references to him by our Saviour. He clearly believed that Satan was a person and not merely a vague influence or force.

At the opening of His public work, Jesus received a very impressive and significant baptism in the Jordan river. He then went into the wilderness to fast and pray and while there He was strenuously tempted. Notice the nature of the last temptation. Jesus was taken in spirit to the top of a high mountain from which He saw all the kingdoms of the world. "All these things will I give Thee," said Satan to Him, "if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus to him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." Matt. 4:9, 10.

Notice the feeling of Satan's reality that this narrative gives. Satan wished to put himself in

God's place and be the object of the worship that belongs only to Him. The epilogue reads: "Then the devil leaveth Him; and behold angels came and ministered unto Him." Verse 11.

This is literal language. The devil came, the devil tempted in a specific way, the devil left. Thus right at the beginning of His ministry Jesus' experience kept before Him the fact that temptation was as real as the tempter behind it.

But this was not Jesus' first encounter with Satan, for when condemning the critical Jews for their willing service to Satan, He said: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. 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.

Notice the compactness of Jesus' trenchant statement. He makes three main assertions:

1. The devil was once righteous, but abode not in the truth.
2. His character is now completely evil.
3. In wicked men he reproduces his wickedness.

Satan's Terrible History

This is the germ of the teaching of the remainder of the Bible on the character and influence of the devil. Let us reconstruct the life story of Satan, so that we may better understand the meaning of the evil of the world, and also God's final purpose for it. Here is a brief sketch:

He was created by God before the world was in existence. He was given the highest position in the celestial scheme that could be given a created being, and in this position was called "Lucifer." He desired to become divine. This was not possible for a created being, and therefore not for him; his ambition grew. Rebellion against God was fomented and other created beings joined him in his discontent. He with them was ejected from the communion with God in "heaven." The world having now been created, he came here and was successful in making it sinful. His crowning sin was the murder of Jesus. Finally when Jesus returns, Satan (who desires no repentance) with his cohorts, both angels and men, will admit their guilt and God's justice. Sin and its originator will then be destroyed.

Passages from two Old Testament prophets, Isaiah fourteen and Ezekiel twenty-eight, explain the origin and destiny of the devil. These passages, while placed in a local setting, are by no means exhausted when applied to those to whom they are

immediately addressed. They provide excellent examples of the "dualistic prophecies" so characteristic of the prophetic writings.

When Lucifer was created he was perfect. (Ezek. 28:15.) His ability was such that he was placed in the very presence of God. He was the "covering cherub," the angel who dwelt closer to God than any other. (Ezek. 28:14.) But iniquity was found in his heart. (Ezek. 28:15.) No-one can explain how or why. To explain evil would be to excuse it. It grew to such dimensions that the conflict between self-service and loyalty to God burst out into open complaint.

The book of Revelation supplies the next link. It takes us to the success of Lucifer in winning angels to his dissatisfaction, and of God's action in seeking to correct the evil.

"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. And I 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. 12:7-10.

Peter adds: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Peter 2:4.

Jesus, or Michael as He is here called, the meaning of which is "One who is like God," is depicted as bringing influences to bear upon the rebellious Lucifer such as would bring him back to his former faithfulness and contentment. When all was in vain, there was no alternative but to deny the discontented ones the atmosphere of heaven and debar them from the communion which it offered. The devil and his angels were "cast out into the earth," or as Peter describes the same incident "cast . . . down to hell." Jesus on one occasion referring to this catastrophe said: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Luke 10:18.

God Will Triumph

After the creation of the world, Satan found his way here. It would be useless to speculate as to what time elapsed between the different stages of the developing drama; we know that the

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By T. K. Martin

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In the innermost recesses of the sanctuary was the ark of God containing the sacred law.

LAW AND GRACE

By George Keough

★ It is usual to write the words, "Law and Grace," or "The Law and the Gospel," in that order. There is no reason why they should not be written in the reverse order, "Grace and the Law," but it is not the custom. That may be because the rule of law was the rule of life before sin "set on fire the course of nature," bringing destruction everywhere and death to all. It was not until the law had been broken, and sin had brought alienation from God, that the need for grace, by which we mean the grace of forbearance, the grace of forgiveness, and the grace of salvation and re-creation, to restore again the harmony which sin had broken, became a necessity.

If there had been no transgression of the law, the graces of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance would have prevailed everywhere. But because these graces had

been banished from the earth by sin, the other graces named—and it is to them we refer when we speak of "grace" as opposed to law—were required to take away sin, and restore righteousness.

Grace is not an excuse for sin, nor, because it is free, is it cheap. It cost the Son of God untold humiliation and suffering and death. God alone has a monopoly of it, and He offers it freely to all men.

Symbols of the Sanctuary

Law and grace were symbolized in olden times, before the first advent of Jesus, in the ark of the covenant and the altar of burnt-offering, the one at the far end of the sanctuary, and the other at the entrance to it. The services of the sanctuary began in the court, at the altar of burnt-offering, and reached their culmination in the most holy

place, by the ark of the covenant. The altar was approachable by all. (Lev. 22:18.) The sinner could come to it freely, and be sanctified by the contact. The ark could be approached by the high priest alone, carrying in his hands the blood of the atoning sacrifice (Heb. 9:7), and hiding behind a cloud of sweet incense. (Lev. 16:13.) Even then he might not escape the consequence of having dared to come into the presence of God, before the law, while in this mortal state. So he had on the hem of his garment bells that would tell of his movements, the sound of which would assure the listening people that he was still alive and accepted, and they with him. (Exod. 28:35.) The blood and incense saved him.

Contrasts of Altar and Ark

The ark could not be seen by human eye (Numbers 4:20), nor touched by human hands, (Numbers 4:15), save those of the high priest. (Numbers 4:5.) To touch the ark, even if the part touched was the mercy-seat, meant instant death (1 Chron. 13:9, 10), and thousands perished because they looked into it. (1 Sam. 6:19.) It was like Mount Sinai when the Lord descended upon it to proclaim the law, "Whosoever touches it shall surely be put to death" (Exod. 19:12), and even if an animal touched it, it was to be stoned or shot through (verse 13). It was like the face of God: "No man shall see My face and live." Exod. 33:20.

It was the presence of God above the ark, and the law within it that had been transgressed, that made it such a fearful object. The ark was therefore secluded and hidden from the sight of even the priests who ministered daily in the sanctuary. But though hidden and unapproachable, it dominated the whole work of the sanctuary. It had "the last word," so to speak, in the work of atonement. The forgiven sins, ministered to the truly repentant at the altar, the symbol of grace, could not be sent away into oblivion till the blood of the atoning sacrifice had been sprinkled on its cover. (See Leviticus 16.)

In complete contrast to the ark of the covenant was the altar of burnt-offering. It was an altar most holy, and everything that touched it was at once sanctified. (Exod. 29:37.) It sanctified the gift that was placed upon it. (Matt. 23:19.) It could not be said, or implied, that the ark was more holy than the altar, for the altar was "most holy," and nothing could be more holy than that. But the nature of the two things symbolized was different. The one typified the law, and the other

symbolized grace. Access to grace was open to the sinner, while access to the law, to the presence of God, was impossible, till complete atonement had been made.

Both Are Types of Christ's Work

These two very different symbols were alike in that they both were types of Christ. As we look at the altar, with its bleeding victim, we are certain that we are looking at "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. There is demonstrated the love of God for lost sinners. On the other hand, the law within the ark was a transcript of the character of Christ. The law is the truth (Psa. 119:142), and Jesus is the truth. (John 14:6.) The law is love (Rom. 13:10), and God is love (1 John 4:8). The law is light (Prov. 6:23), and Christ is light (John 1:9). The law was enshrined in the ark (Exod. 25:16), and was within the heart of Jesus. (Psa. 40:8.) The glory of God was manifested on the ark, between the two cherubim (Exod. 25:22), and it was manifested in Christ (Isa. 40:5; John 1:14). The ark is therefore a type of Christ, as was the altar also. He is the personification of both law and grace.

The sinner went to the altar to find forgiveness, and he was welcomed, and grace restored in him the image of Jesus. It wrote the law in his heart (Heb. 8:10), to enable him to come into God's presence. The one was a means of bringing the sinner into harmony with the other. When the law was written in the heart, and man had become partaker of the divine nature through grace, then, and only then, he could go into the presence of God, into the most holy place, before the ark, with no fear of any terrible consequence, for perfect love had cast out all fear.

Jesus is the Lamb of God, and He is also the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, the One before whom the earth staggers and the people tremble (Psa. 99:1), for He is holy. All this may seem paradoxical, and "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, . . . received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3:16. It is, however, clearly explained by Paul: "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God" did when He sent His Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh," . . . "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Rom. 8:3, 4. It is an impenetrable mystery how Jesus, the embodiment of the law, before which no sinner could come and escape

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THREE HEAVENLY VIS

By J. A. McMillan

★ IN our previous article we considered the lamb-like beast, with the dragon voice, that would be instrumental in fashioning an image or likeness to the papal power in the last days. John now turns our attention from earthly powers to a movement of heavenly origin. From a beast rising out of the earth, he directs our gaze to angels "flying in the midst of heaven." Rev. 14:6. This is to signify that the symbols of this fifth wonder or sign bear a divine message. This indeed is evident from the description of the first heavenly visitant. He carries "the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:6, 7.

"A Final Gospel"

The setting of this heaven-inspired message is clearly established. It looks back in its pronouncement to the creation of the image made by the lamb-like beast, for the attendant message of the third angel warns against worshipping "the beast and his image." Rev. 14:9. Secondly, this message announces the hour of God's judgment as having come. (Rev. 14:7.) And thirdly, at the conclusion of this message, and consequent to its proclamation, comes the final harvest when Jesus returns, sitting upon a white cloud and bearing in His right hand a sharp sickle with which to reap the harvest of the earth. (Rev. 14:14-20.) This then must be God's final warning and saving appeal to mankind before probation ends and mercy's voice is for ever silenced. Knox's translation brings out this thought: "I saw, too, another angel flying in mid-heaven, carrying with him a final Gospel."

Before entering into any exposition of the three angels' messages, it should be noticed that this is no new theology, or modern message. It is termed "the everlasting Gospel." The apostle Paul warned the Galatian believers against

"another gospel: which is not another; . . . but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1:6-8. This everlasting Gospel concerns "the grace of Christ." It was preached to Abraham, and to the ancient Israelites. (Gal. 3:8; Heb. 4:2.) Christ's grace or saving power has been extended to mankind since the first promise of deliverance from Satan's thralldom. (See Genesis 3:15; 6:8; 19:19; Exodus 33:12.) But God's good news has ever been preached in the setting of the times in which it was due. In Noah's day it included a warning about the Flood. In Jonah's day, it called the Ninevites to repentance. In Luther's day it denounced the apostasy of the Catholic church. In Wesley's day it revived heartfelt religion and scorned the world's cold frown. And in our day it announces the hour of God's judgment, condemns Babylon's fall, and appeals to men everywhere to "worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." No preoccupation with the details of the message, no difficulty in understanding this or that detail of the symbols employed, must be permitted to blind our eyes to this central truth: The ever-



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lasting Gospel is the proclamation of the grace of Christ—or this angel stands under the anathema of Paul's inspired dictum.

Space forbids our entering into an exhaustive exposition of this passage. Suffice it to say that Daniel and Revelation are complementary prophecies. Each supplies what is lacking in the other. This we saw with regard to Revelation 13:1-11. So also here. John gives us the *content* of the judgment-hour message; Daniel supplies the data for establishing the *actual time* when it began. And furthermore in the sanctuary service we see in vivid symbolism the out-working of the divine purpose here consummated.

Daniel was told that from the decree for the rebuilding of the temple which went forth in 457 B.C., seventy weeks of years would be given to the Jews as probationary time. (Dan. 9.) Beyond this period which ended in A.D. 34 with the going of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46), a further 1,810 years would elapse before "the sanctuary" should be "cleansed." Dan. 8:14. This long period would therefore stretch down to A.D. 1844. The "sanctuary" at this time could obviously not be the Jewish temple since that was destroyed in A.D. 70 and never rebuilt. Paul, however, tells us that in this Christian age Jesus is our High Priest and "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the



The three flying angels represent the last Gospel message of mercy to a doomed world.

true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Heb. 8:1, 2. He also tells us that the old tabernacle was a type of this heavenly service. (Heb. 8:5; 9:1-11.)

The World's "Day of Atonement"

Now in the Mosaic sanctuary, a series of annual feasts typically set forth the outstanding events of the Gospel dispensation. Our Lord's death was shadowed by the Passover. (1 Cor. 5:7.) His resurrection was typified by the waving of the first-fruits. (Lev. 23:11; 1 Cor. 15:23.) Pentecost is too well known to need exposition here. (Lev. 23:15, 16; Acts 2:1.) In the seventh or final month of the festive year, the Israelites had two feasts closely connected with Revelation 14:6-12. On the first day came the blowing of trumpets. (Lev. 23:24.) And on the tenth day was the Day of Atonement. This was also the day of cleansing the sanctuary. (Lev. 23:27-32; 16:15-19.) This typified the day of judgment for Israel. (Lev. 23:29.) That such a cleansing occurs in the

heavenly sanctuary is stated by Paul. "It was needful therefore that the copies of the things in heaven should be cleansed in this way [i.e. by the blood of sacrificial animals], but that the heavenly things themselves should be cleansed with more costly sacrifices." Heb. 9:23 (Weymouth). That was a typical cleansing, effected by the blood of bulls and goats; this an actual cleansing effected by the blood of Christ.

As the blowing of trumpets preceded the Day of Atonement, so did the great Advent awakening precede the announcement of the hour of God's judgment in A.D. 1844. And this has since been followed by the messages of the two accompanying angels. Today this threefold message wings its way to the uttermost parts of the earth. It transcends all national boundaries, for it is addressed to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. It transcends all denominational barriers, for it addresses the individual, declaring: "If *any man* worship the beast and his image." Rev. 14:6, 9. This is a world-embracing message, for it calls all men before the judgment bar of God.

God's Challenge to Our Time

It is a *timely message*, calling men back to the worship of the Creator. It is also a *unifying message*, for it condemns the confusion of Babylon and gathers out a people who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. It is a *challenging message*, meeting the beast and his image, and ranging mankind on one side or the other.

In our previous study we saw the lamb-like beast assert itself, roar like a dragon, and command "them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast. . . . And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Rev. 13:14, 15.

We should notice one vital point here. Worship is synonymous with service. Whomsoever we serve, whether from devotion or fear, him we worship. When Satan tempted Jesus to worship Him, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt *worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.*" Luke 4:8. Paul expresses the same principle in Romans 6:16. Mankind, then, in the final stakes of the great controversy, will be confronted with two choices. On the one hand is the papal-protestant image, demanding the allegiance of all and threatening economic sanctions against every-

one who refuses to accept his mark, or worship at his feet. On the other hand, is this divinely indited message appealing to all to worship the Creator, to discern the confusion of Babylon, and to come out of her human traditions. There follows the most terrifying warning of the entire Scriptures against those who worship the beast or his image, or accept his mark or badge of distinction. (Rev. 14:10, 11.)

At this time occurs the fulfilment of Malachi 3:17, 18. The Lord is making up the number of His people. Those who love Him and witness for Him will be delivered, for the Lord of hosts declares: "And I will claim them, . . . as My own prized possession, on the day when I take action; I will spare them, as a man spares the son who works in his service. Then once more shall you see the difference between good and bad, between him who serves God and him who does not serve Him. For the day is coming, burning like an oven; worldly men and evildoers shall be straw then, and the day to come (the Lord of hosts declares) shall set them all ablaze, leaving them neither root nor branch. But for you, My worshippers, the saving Sun shall rise with healing in His rays." Mal. 3:17; 4:2 (Moffatt).

John ends this prophetic passage with the same note of victory. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and they sing." Rev. 14:12; 15: 2, 3. Here is complete victory, here is rejoicing and singing such as the world never saw before. May God grant you and I be there. There with the redeemed. There with the triumphant, blood-washed throng. There by the grace of Christ.

Law and Grace

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death, could come into this world and live among sinners, and they not be destroyed by His presence. The answer is that He was Grace and Law, and in Him "mercy and truth . . . met together; righteousness and peace . . . kissed each other." Psalms 85:10. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33.

The Lure of Spiritism

By Peter L. Parker

★ THE desire to investigate the unknown or supernatural has always been an attraction to countless people. Novels have been written on this theme and films are frequently produced and plays acted around this desire.

Spiritism claims to provide a passport into the supernatural, and thousands have flocked to séances and spiritist circles to see its strange phenomena and listen to messages, supposedly from dead relatives or friends. Materialists have come away from these meetings baffled, and not a few have been "converted" into active spiritists.

What does all this mean? Does the abnormal really occur in these meetings? If so, how? Can spiritism be used as a means for the benefit and betterment of mankind? How few turn to the Bible to seek the answer to these problems, yet it was to guide us into all truth that the inspired Scriptures were given us.

In one place we categorically read: "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all these things are an abomination unto the Lord." Deut. 18:10-12.

Here we see a form of spiritism practised many years ago condemned by the Lord as evil. Many modern spiritists would be scandalized by the suggestion that their practices are similar to those that were rebuked so strongly among the ancient Israelites. Yet who can deny that their séances bear a striking similarity?

An Ancient Séance

Let us enter a séance room more than one thousand years before Christ. Saul, the first king

of Israel enters, discouraged but rebellious at heart, because the Lord would not communicate with him through the Urim and Thummim, nor by prophets. The king has sunk so low that he has decided to consult this witch of Endor, even though, shortly before, he had decreed death to all witches in Israel.

This poor woman, suspicious of these disguised royal visitors seeks assurance of the safety of her life. Once assured, she begins her incantations as bidden. A spirit figure appears whom the woman describes as if it were the prophet Samuel. Here she implied a lie, because no man or woman had any power to bring to life the deceased Samuel. The spirit speaks telling the trembling king that he has lost his kingdom, that he would lose his battles, and also lose his sons. (See 1 Samuel 28.)

No a single word of hope, not a hint of encouragement or of mercy is mingled with the scathing reproof. No exhortation to turn, obey, and live, as we read in true messages from God. King Saul is left in a worse state still to meet his death, hopeless and helpless.

Is It Different Today?

But what of spiritism today? Does the modern approach and Christian name put a different aspect upon it than it was given in Saul's time? Is it now good, when once it was evil?



© Keystone

A spiritualist meeting in London.

OCTOBER 1, 1953

Your BIBLE QUESTIONS Answered

We would warn that not in the very least whit is it less evil today. Actually it is far more dangerous for its subtle, pleasing face. It is the same evil clothed as an angel of light. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:19, 20.

Reproof will come from God—yes, but not to dishearten. In every circumstance, the Lord has the good and the eternal welfare of each soul at heart. All are precious in His sight, and His Word is full of precious promises of forgiveness and encouragement to overcome.

Who Are the Spirits?

Who was it then, that Saul spoke to, seeing that it could not have been Samuel? Who is it that modern spiritists speak with?

"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.

The answer as we read it is that unseen around us, there are fallen angels under the leadership of the great fallen angel, Satan, the Devil, or Lucifer. He and his associates walk to and fro throughout the earth "seeking" whom they "may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

Spiritism is thus direct communication with the devil's associates who most certainly can work miracles. This explains why spiritist meetings are attended with all sorts of strange phenomena. Tables tilt, horns blow, chairs dance and like useless things. Oh, yes, it all actually happens, but it is not loved relatives whom we have laid to rest in the graves who demonstrate in this way. It is the work of devils, deceiving and leading men and women to perdition, where they themselves will go.

Surely then we should shun it and warn all who have any inclination toward it, seeking to lead them away from its snares and into the true way of peace and life.

What is the real meaning of the communion service?

THE origin of the Communion service goes back to the Holy Week nearly 2,000 years ago when Christ and His disciples instituted what we call the Lord's Supper. Paul, in speaking of this by inspiration, says in first Corinthians eleven: "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

So the Communion service is a reminder or memorial of the death of Christ. As the communicant enters into this service, he recognizes his utter dependence upon the death of Christ for forgiveness of sins and salvation. You will notice also that the service links our Saviour's death with His coming again in glory, for, as I have just read, "Ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Through His death on Calvary He will finally triumph over all that is evil.

Do you think it right to get information from ghosts?

If the writer of this question refers to the so-called "familiar spirits" which claim to bring information to men, I would refer him to Isaiah 8:19, 20: "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Can you explain Psalm 50:3?

THIS text reads, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him." David is no doubt referring to our Lord's coming again, for the next two verses speak of the judgment and the gathering of the saints of God. You will notice again the glory and awesome spectacle surrounding His coming.

Is There a Personal Devil?

(Continued from page 5.)

designs were only too successful. Now, he is the "prince of this world." He claimed the dominion which was originally given to Adam. Christ died to give it back into the hands of divine goodness, so that the world might once again know one Ruler and have no degrading elements in it. However, time is required for the complete fulfilment of Gods' purpose, and in the interim between the death of Jesus and the obliteration of evil, the devil is making supreme efforts to influence as many as possible to become like him. But they are the efforts of a conquered foe. They are the last thrusts of a beaten fighter who uses every opportunity to do harm, although vanquished.

How do I know that he is beaten? Jesus said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." John 12:31. The purpose of Jesus' ministry and death was to eradicate sin from the universe: "For this purpose,

the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8.

Here, then is the great fulfilment of God's purpose, when from the conquest of sin through death there will arise a world in which there is neither sin nor death. Here is the only adequate answer to the oft-repeated question, "Why does God allow it all?" He allows it because He wants us to see that He has done the best He could have done.

Do you see the significance of these things? Evil is not some vague, nebulous entity that matters little, not being our fault nor concern. We are in the conflict. The decisions taken or not taken, with thought and care or without either, stamp us under whose banner we be. We cannot serve both Satan and Jesus. Serving Jesus brings rewards here and hereafter, contentment of heart, and a knowledge that life is attaining its real purpose. It is worth everything we have or ever will be to have that assurance.



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ARE YOU PERPLEXED

about world events and the future as planned by God?

Often you've wondered if there is anything sure . . . anything you can confidently look to for hope and courage.

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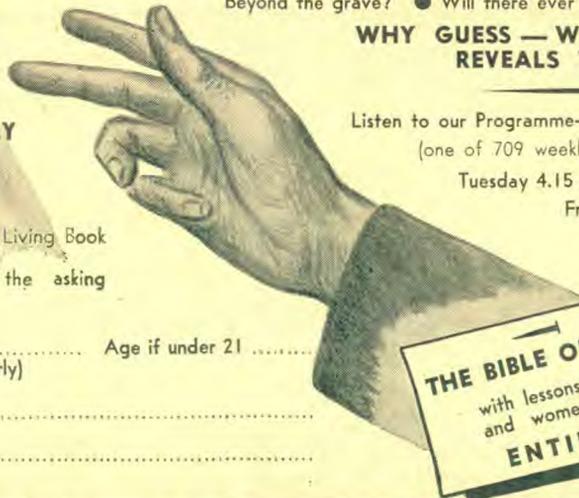
to questions vital to each one of us such as ● Why does God permit sin and suffering? ● Will Christ come in our day? ● Is there life beyond the grave? ● Will there ever be lasting peace? etc., etc.

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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

Prince Told Them

By Margaret Locke

"BOO-HOO-HOO-HOO."

Marvin threw himself down on the cot on the back porch, and cried as if his heart were broken.

"Why, Marvin," exclaimed his elder sister coming out the back door, "whatever is the matter? Tell sister."

"I've hunted everywhere for Prince. I've asked everyone. I've called and called. Prince is gone. I'll never see him again. Boo-hoo-hoo."

"Marvin, don't take it so hard. I don't believe it's as bad as that. We'll look some more, and if we don't find him we'll put an advert. in the paper. Perhaps he is snooping around. Maybe he'll come back at any time."

"But he never went away be-

fore, except across the street. He always stayed at home unless he went with me. He was such a good dog. I'm afraid someone has poisoned him. Boo-hoo-hoo."

"I don't think anyone would poison Prince. He never bothered anyone or barked at night. I think we shall find him yet."

Prince was indeed a fine Aire-dale, and Marvin greatly loved his pet. Marvin felt sad when he thought of his dog. About a week after Prince had disappeared, Tim Conner called excitedly that he wanted to tell him something. "I think I know where your dog is," he said.

"Where?" asked Marvin, overjoyed at the thought that he might have his pet back home again.

"You know Jack Dunkin? He was down town with a dog on a leash. He called him Brownie, but I'm sure it was Prince."

"I'm going to hunt him up right now," said Marvin, starting off.

"Know where he lives?"

"Yes — just beyond Main Street on Beech Avenue."

It didn't take Marvin long to

A Little Child's Prayer

Jesus, Friend of little children,
Make me more like Thee—
Kind obedient, gentle, loving;
I would always be.

When I grieve Thee please for-
give me.

Send me strength each day
Just to follow in Thy footsteps,
Help me Lord, I pray.

Lilian G. Heard.

reach Main Street. He was turning a corner when he caught sight of Jack. Sure enough, on the end of a leash was Prince—or was it? But Jack had seen Marvin first, and like a flash he disappeared. Where did he go? Marvin thought he went into a shop, but no Jack was to be seen in the shop. Marvin darted around another corner, and almost ran into Jack, who came stalking out from an alley.



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 15th. (In case OUR TIMES arrives late, still send your entry. All attempts will be considered.)

"Where's my dog?" shouted Marvin.

"Your dog? I don't know anything about your dog. What are you talking about, anyway?"

"You know you've got Prince, my dog. Tell me where he is or I'll—I'll—." Marvin was no fighter, but he felt in his heart that Jack was guilty of stealing his pet. Besides, if it were not Prince that Jack had, then why did he suddenly get rid of him? Where had he taken him?

Jack started to move on, but Marvin sprang and grabbed hold of his coat tail, crying, "Thief, thief," at the top of his lungs. Jack tried to pull loose, and struck at Marvin, who held on all the tighter. Presently both boys were rolling on the path. People stopped and looked, and a policeman came from the other side of the street. He took both boys by the collars and marched them to the police station.

"Now young chaps," he said, "sit down and tell me what this is all about."

"He stole my dog," sobbed Marvin.

"Didn't—it's my dog," said Jack, but he looked down at the floor rather sheepishly as he said it.

"Now, one at a time, tell me your story," said the officer.

Marvin told all about his loss and how he had caught sight of Jack and the dog, and what had followed.

"Why did you get rid of the dog so quickly?" asked the officer, looking steadily at Jack.

"Well—I had to go to the shoeshop, and Brownie was rather a nuisance in town, so I ran around to where my brother was and asked him to take him home," said Jack, trying to evade the officer's piercing look.

"Listen, young man. You go straight home, get that dog, and bring him back in a hurry. I am going to find out whose dog this really is."

"He'll be back in a jiffy," said the officer to Marvin. "I want

"He Giveth His Beloved Sleep"

The weary day is o'er at length,
And many tasks have spent our strength.

But golden gleams from out the west
Now bid us cease our toils and rest.

While angel guards their vigils keep.

Our Father gives beloved sleep,
As now our drooping eyelids close
In silent hours of calm repose.

How dear the sweet refreshing power
Attending every restful hour,
That life and vigour will renew
As earth is gladdened by the dew.

So welcome we the tranquil eve
In which such blessings we receive,

The means whereby we work and play,
The strength to live from day to day.

Gwen Yeates.

you to go into that side room and stay quiet until I clear my throat real loud. Then call your dog, and we'll see what he will do."

"Good-looking dog," said the officer, patting the dog's head a few minutes later. "What is your name—Rover? Bouncer? Toby?" No movement of recognition from the dog. "Is your name Brownie?" The tail wagged a bit.

"Ahem—a-hem," from the officer.

"Prince, Prince," called Marvin. Up jumped the animal excitedly, and, running to the door, he whined and barked and scratched to be let in.

"You may come out now," said the officer.

Marvin and Prince rushed together in one loving embrace. Jack looked miserable, and wanted to run out and disappear.

"Now, young man, you took the dog, didn't you?"

"Y-e-s, sir," stammered Jack, trembling.

"And you lied about it, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir," was the faint answer.

"Let me tell you, young man, that stealing and lying do not pay. They will get you into trouble every time."

"I'm sorry, and I won't do it again," sobbed Jack.

"See that you don't," said the officer. "You won't get off so easily next time."

Jack left. So did Marvin and Prince, and they were wonderfully happy.

Results of Competition No. 16

Prize-winners.—Alan Crowe, 12 Highland Way, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft. Age 13; Joseph Cartwright, 25 Moor-thorne Crescent, Stoke-on-Trent. Age 9.

Honourable Mention.—Jennifer Grady (Enfield); Dawn Mountford (Stoke-on-Trent); Maureen Stone (Pennington); Richard Payne (Woodmancote); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Siegfried Baron (Church); Esther Dunstan (Bodmin); Eleonora Baron (Church); Amy Randle-son (Stockton); Anthony Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Margaret Peart (Bishops Cleeve).

Those who tried hard.—Jean Simmons (Torquay); Gail Meadows (Chelmsford); Josephine Dunstan (Bodmin); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Gillian Dove (Edgware); June Cox (Rickmans-worth); G. M. Gordon (Mablethorpe); Elizabeth Barker (Huntingdon); Eunice Pitcher (Lowestoft); Valerie Waite (Coventry); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Esther Shaw (Skegness); Gillian Ball (Yelverton); Linda Cracknell (?); Roger Campbell (Huntingdon); Ronald Ball (Yelverton); Leon Liddament (Norwich).

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Straws in the Wind

Unnumbered Inhabited Worlds

SPEAKING in Chicago, atomic scientist Dr. Harold C. Urey stated that there may be a thousand billion worlds inhabited by living beings.

World Air Traffic

ACCORDING to statistics issued by the International Civil Aviation Organization, forty-five million passengers travelled by air in 1952, compared with less than forty million in 1951. The mileage of just over 1,000 million was six times that flown in 1937.

Proportion of Doctors

IN the Israeli state there was one doctor for each 380 inhabitants in 1950, according to the 1952 *UN Statistical Year Book*. This is the highest proportion in any country.

In the United States there was one to 750 persons, in France one to 1,100, in Latin America one to 1,800, and in Nigeria one to 88,000, and in Ethiopia one to 150,000 persons.

Bible Society's "Stupendous Achievements"

ADDRESSING the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Earl of Selkirk characterized as "really stupendous" the fact that in the

150 years of its existence the society had distributed 595 million Bibles and portions.

Hollywood Slump

As a result of more and more American films being made

abroad, Hollywood is stated to be fast becoming a "ghost town." Fifty per cent of the technical workers are unemployed, and, but for the making of television films, the proportion would be seventy-five per cent.

Easter Island Air Port

EASTER Island, famous for its huge stone totem heads, is to be a trans-Pacific airline stopping place.

Which Day Is the Sabbath?

IN a letter to the *Daily Mirror*, Mr. B. Simmons of Worthing asked: "Why will critics of Royalty's activities on Sundays continually refer to that day as The Sabbath? Sunday is not, never has been, and never will be The Sabbath."

The editor of the "Live Letters" corner very correctly replied, as we have pointed out so many times in our columns: "Of course not. The Sabbath is Saturday, the seventh day of the week as per the Creation and the Commandments."

"Coronation" Scriptures

THE four Scripture publishers in this country report a total distribution of 1,542,000 "Coronation" volumes, comprising 326,000 complete Bibles and 1,216,000 New Testaments.

The Shadowed Way

Sometimes God sends affliction
Of pain, or care, or grief,
Awhile the smile goes out of life
You long for some relief.

He sees the fire is not too hot.
'Tis all in His control;
His tender gaze is fixed on you,
He holds and keeps your soul.

One day He'll look at you and see
A purer, brighter gold;
Because some dross has burnt
away
Some sin has lost its hold.

He'll raise you from the furnace;
You'll see the sun shine through.
The smile of life will come again.
And everything be new.

The trial will have lifted.
And His dear face you'll see;
You'll thank Him for the shadowed
way.

For love so full and free.
Mrs. G. L. Brown.

