

The Bible and



OUR TIMES

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What Is Coming?

By Victor Hall



"UPON the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; . . . men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:25, 26.

Could we have a more accurate portrayal of world conditions today? There is at the present time fear of worse than war—a fear of total extermination. President Truman once referred to the existence of new weapons, "fantastic in their operation," which would wipe out civilization in the event of an all-out war.

Has our world any message for us? Wrote Beverley Baxter: "Men in their vanity have tried to prove that they are their own gods and that religion is a superstition to comfort children in the dark. Yet as the shadows lengthen even the braggarts feel the emptiness of doubt. The world is spiritually starved. Neither in the arts nor in politics is there any message these days but harshness and fear."

God Has Spoken

Where then can we look for a message of encouragement and hope? The answer is, where human beings have always been able to find such a message—to the great God of heaven. God knows what is coming! "I am God," He says, "and there is none else, . . . declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: . . . I have purposed it, I will also do it." Isa. 46:9-11.

Can you believe those words? As you open your newspaper tomorrow, with its gloomy paragraphs of news, can you say within your heart that you know there is a God working out His purpose, that in the words of one writer: "Above



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French troops watch for the enemy's next move over the barbed wire in Indo-China.

the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned. All things are open to His divine survey. And from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best" (E. G. White)? If that truth can come home to you, you will not need to fear what is coming.

How, then, can we be sure that God not only knows all things, but, through the play and counterplay of human affairs, is successfully working out His own purpose? The prophet Amos tells us: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret to His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7 God has revealed beforehand to His prophets the way in which He works that we might see His purpose fulfilling before our eyes. He breathed His message into the minds of holy men, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16. In

the Scriptures a complete plan is revealed by One who knows the end from the beginning. The yet unborn future is traced as surely and accurately as the past.

The apostle Peter tells us that Bible prophecy is God's searchlight shining into the darkness of the future that we might know what is coming and prepare for it. (2 Peter 1:19.)

Given for Us to Understand

Yet how often do we hear a sermon on prophetic themes? Can God have given us His Word, one-third of which is prophecy, and not expect us to read, to hear, to understand?

Declared Paul of the last days: "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them; . . . and they shall not escape." 1 Thess. 5:3. Are we crying "Peace! Peace!"—ever so sincerely—and neglecting to sound the warning of sudden destruction? One of the prominent ministers of the city said at a Lord's Day Observance Society rally, "I believe that this is a day in which a weak and sentimental gospel will never touch the people but will move them to contempt. I believe that these are evil days when only a message of judgment upon the godless will have any effect." Amen, I say. My own personal conviction is that a rediscovery of prophetic certainties concerning the days in which we live will strengthen the Gospel's appeal to the hearts of men. Here is the proof for my statement:

When John the Baptist was asked his authority for preaching so confidently he said: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord." He found his commission in the prophetic utterance of Isaiah. (Isa. 40:3; John 1:23.)

When our Lord stood up to read in the synagogue at Nazareth He too read from the prophet Isaiah. (Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:16-21.) His comment on that passage was: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Jesus knew that His ministry and His message were a direct fulfilment of prophecy.

When the apostle Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost he said of the miraculous power that accom-

panied his preaching, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Acts 2:4-21; Joel 2:28-32. The confidence of the early Christian church was in the prophetic Word.

Men With a Message

Come through the years to the sixteenth century. Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart, both diligent students of the prophecies, were martyred in Scotland for their faith. The fires which consumed their bodies kindled another in the mind of one, John Knox. In 1547 he was finally persuaded to give a dissertation in the parish church of St. Andrews concerning those things he believed and wrote. He took his text from Daniel, chapter seven, and showed that the church was fulfilling the prophetic picture of the apostate faith. Thereupon he called Scots to separate themselves from it. Thus was sounded the keynote of the Reformation in Scotland. Scottish Protestantism was reared in the setting of Bible prophecy.

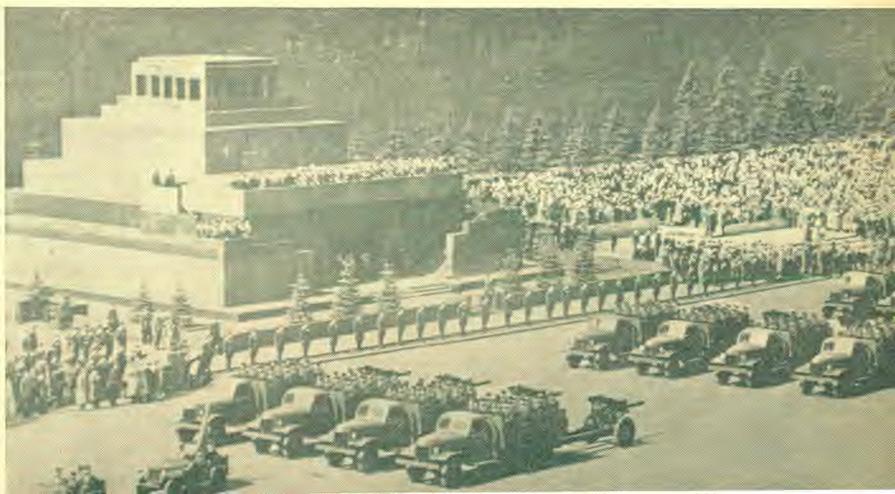
Over one hundred years ago there was a revived interest in the Bible prophecies concerning the return of Christ to this earth and the end of the world. Many prominent churchmen were in this movement, including Edward Irving, Henry Drummond, and Alexander Keith. If we wish to see the power of the church revive let us re-discover God's prophetic message for today. It will inspire us with greater urgency in our work as Christians.

The prophetic word will increase our faith in the person of Jesus Christ. He said: "I tell you before it come to pass, that ye may believe that I am." John 13:19, R.V. (margin). We shall see Him more clearly as the One who stepped into the breach made by man's failure. We shall realize more fully the price paid for our redemption by Him upon the cross. With growing faith we shall see Him as the One who is working out the

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© International News
Soviet armoured troops
parade before Lenin's tomb in
Moscow.

OCTOBER 15, 1953





The jailer of Philippi prostrates himself in terror before the apostle Paul.

By F. Shields

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

By George Elliott

★ NEARLY everyone is acquainted in a general way with the teachings of Christianity. Apart from the active adherents of the Christian faith, millions outside its ranks view them with respect. They value the achievements of Christianity, applaud its aims, agree with its ethics, they even respond to its appeals for worthy endeavours. Yet withal the significance of the Evangel can be said to have eluded them, for they make no personal application of the Gospel to themselves. Why?

A major reason is because they have long since become conditioned to a modern philosophy of life which is not only contrary to the principles and objectives of the Bible, but which deliberately and unashamedly sets out to discount what it reveals.

What guilt can be affixed to sin when it is passed off as merely "under-development"? Who, after being schooled in the delusion of inevitable human progress, can be expected to worry about the "salvation" of the sinner? By this time the soul's need has disappeared. There remains no sense of accountability to God, and consequently no hunger for His grace.

Hence, the prelude to knowing "what to do" must be the shock treatment of conviction of sin. This calls for some plain speaking concerning those sacred monoliths of fact upon which the Christian faith is built. "In the beginning God." "In Him was life." "So God created man in His own image." Gen. 1:1, 27; John 1:4. Then tragically, but in eloquent explanation of present

issues, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Rom. 5:12. By an even more tragic extension of the malady, "all we like sheep have gone astray." Isa. 53:6. And so "death passed upon all men." Rom. 5:12.

Our Need of a Saviour

When these manifest truths are candidly admitted by the inquirer, he or she is prepared to face up to God's estimation of man's shortcomings. Our carnal conceptions and feelings can be very misleading, but God speaks in terms of spiritual values and refers to "the natural man" as "dead in sins," "alienated from the life of God," "having the understanding darkened," "having no hope and without God." Eph. 4:18; 2:12.

Step by step, therefore, it is the gracious purpose of our Maker to lead His erring children into acceptance of His wonderful plan for their redemption. He does this first by underlining their need. The divine method is simplicity itself. God confronts the wrong-doer with that flawless mirror of conduct, His moral law of Ten Commandments. What better can define sin than that which prohibits it? In this law's eloquent brevity is the proof of its heavenly origin. While, for example, it took no fewer than sixty-eight sections of the 1916 Larceny Act to cover every phase of dishonesty, God's pin-point diagnosis is, "Thou shalt not steal!" Exod. 20:5.

In the larger context of the Decalogue *all* the sinful thoughts and intents of the heart are laid bare. And as one's words and deeds, by contrast with God's rubric of righteousness, are seen to be defiled with self and sin, we cannot but exclaim, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 13:18. Then is the time opportune to grasp the mighty salvation of the Lord. For, be assured, He stands ready to pardon every repentant soul. He has made complete provision for guilt to be removed by grace and for life to be recovered from spiritual death through the atonement effected on the cross by our Saviour Jesus Christ.

What to Do?

Probably on no other biblical subject does so much misunderstanding prevail as on this fundamental matter of how to get right with God. All man-made religions are built upon the wholly false idea that man can *do* something to secure the favour of God. It has crept also into Christian thinking. But divine grace is favour which is *unmerited*. It is something which no man can earn. Since Christ's atoning sacrifice is altogether sufficient, all alleged human contributions toward

redemption *itself* are valueless. Salvation, as the Scriptures clearly show, is "not of works." It is "the gift of God" through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Eph. 2:8.)

There is only one way by which any person can apprehend a "gift." And that is to choose to accept it. When you repent and believe the Gospel, when you acknowledge your need of Christ as your personal Saviour, that is acceptance of Him. To believe what God has said of Jesus, accomplished by Jesus, and promised through Jesus, is to qualify for His salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. It is as simple as that!

At the other extreme from the mistake of thinking that it is possible for man to contribute to the act of redemption, is the equally serious error of supposing that all God requires is mental assent! The genuine experience of belief in Christ involves a change of mind, but it must be accompanied by a change of heart, and the proof must be seen in the life. The Scripture well says: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." Matt. 3:8. The evidence of the transformation is that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17. This is what we mean by "conversion."

Will You Follow the Blue-Print?

In the application of redemption (wrought out by Christ alone) to the individual there naturally has to be human co-operation. God begins the good work. (Phil. 1:6.) Man must then will to do right and make full use of God's enabling. (Phil. 2:12.) Remember, the whole purpose of God is to replace the old life of sin with a new life of righteousness. All who have been disobedient to God's law may receive power to obey it through "the obedience of faith." For

He [Christ] is standing at the doorway
Of escape from every sin.

"He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Heb. 7:25.

Now we know what to do, shall we delay any longer? Shall we, like the jailer of old, wait for an *earthquake* before we are moved to cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:30. Shall we not rather quietly pray here and now that humble petition:

Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.



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Moses receives the tables of the law from God on Mount Sinai.

★ WHAT does the Bible mean when it speaks about "law" and "the law"? If you take a Bible concordance and look up that word "law," and make a list of all the texts that contain it, you will find that you can classify the word under several specific headings. You will find that in some cases it means the books of Moses, in others the Ten Commandments; again it might mean the law of Israel's sanctuary services. Then there are still a few texts which do not come under any of these headings.

You will immediately conclude that the Bible does not restrict the use of the term "law" merely to one kind of law. Two examples will make this

How Many "Laws"

are there

In The Bible?

By E. W. H. Vick

abundantly clear: "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace." Eph. 2:15. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Rom. 3:31.

One text here speaks of abolition, the other of establishment. Paul therefore cannot be referring to the same law.

The importance of our distinguishing between the various laws of the Bible has been recognized by all the great Protestant bodies from the time of the Reformation onward. Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Baptists, Adventists, all agree with Article seven of the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England:

"Although the laws given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to bind any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral."

These great church communions all recognize that there is a difference between two groups of laws in the Bible and that this difference is important. Where does this importance lie?

God's Character and the Moral Law

Both these groups of laws have reference to sin and righteousness. Sin is a turning away from God; sin is a shifting from Him and His love. God's character is the standard for our lives and sin is doing what is not like Him. For our guidance God has revealed His character in His law. This law we call "the moral law." It is, in short, the Ten Commandments of Exodus twenty. Sin is a

violation of that law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. This law then reveals that sin has been committed.

The other law, the one governing the services of the sanctuary, told the Israelite what was to be done when sin had been committed. The ceremonial law told the Israelite what he was to do when he recognized his sin and was repentant. In the background of the whole fascinating temple ritual was God's broken moral law. That law was placed within the ark, in the most holy place of the sanctuary, and its violation made the sanctuary service necessary.

Paul speaks of this law of ceremonies thus: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered?" Heb. 10:1, 2.

He here makes two very important remarks about it: 1. It had a limited sphere; 2. It was a shadow. It could not make anyone perfect, but only point out what was to be done when they were imperfect.

The Two Laws

The moral law was spoken by God and written by His own finger, not once, but twice. It was proclaimed as the basis of God's covenant with Israel—that is, God promised them blessing if they would do what He said—and the stones on which the Ten Commandments were written were placed within the sacred ark of the testament, over which shone the bright glory of God's presence.

The ceremonial law which was written down by Moses at God's instruction is, by contrast, always called the "law of Moses." It was not placed in the ark but on a little shelf in the side of the ark.

But there is a greater and vastly more important difference than all these. The Decalogue (which means simply ten words, referring of course to the ten commandments) is perfect. It can never be superseded and there will never come a time in this world or the next when its principles can be dispensed with. They are as eternal as God Himself. Notice: "The law of the Lord is perfect." Psa. 19:7. "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips." Psa. 89:34. "I am the Lord, I change not." Mal. 3:6.

Because God is perfect, His perfection will be the standard in the judgment day. That perfection is revealed in His law. And no man can be judged

by an obsolete law. So the moral law is eternal.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. 12:13, 14. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:12.

In contrast to this, we find many a reference in the New Testament stating that, since the sacrifice of Jesus, there is no further need for sacrifices. In fact, the first Christian martyr was condemned and executed because he preached that the Israelitish ceremonies were now past. (Acts 6:13, 14.)

Paul taught freedom from the ceremonial requirements. He writes that the shadows were no longer to be followed for the reality had appeared. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." Col. 2:14-16.

In this text we have a good outline of the whole of the Hebrew ceremonial, together with reference to Christ's great victory which introduced something better, and so made the former no longer necessary. We have here the distinctions of meat and drink, we have here reference to the special festivals of the Jews, to the sacrifices on the occasion of the new moon and the ceremonial Sabbath days that the Jews kept seven times a year, no matter on what day they chanced to come. All these, Paul says, because they were shadows of something better, have been superseded by Christ's sacrifice which is to those sacrifices as the body is to the shadow.

How great then, is the significance of the tearing of the curtain that separated the most holy things of the temple from the eyes of men!

At the moment of Jesus' death the curtain hiding from sight the most holy place was torn from top to bottom by a divine hand. God was saying: "No more ritual, no more sacrifice, no more earthly temple. Look above, to the Priest on high."

Thus we see the place of the two laws in relation to Calvary and in the life of the child of God then and now.

The moral law is the eternal standard of God's holiness. It condemns sin, causing man to seek

(Continued on page 13.)

★ WE live today in an age of investigation. The past century and a half, in fact, has been characterized by a passion for inquiry into every field of knowledge and experience. And in the process a vast number of assumptions of earlier generations have been swept away and replaced by new conceptions based upon the findings of modern knowledge.

Practically every field of science has been revolutionized. Chemistry, physics, biology, geology, and astronomy have been transformed almost beyond recognition.

Historical and archæological research have added new and hitherto unknown chapters to the story of the development of civilization. Political and economic orders of past ages have been challenged and over a great area of the earth's surface have been superseded by new theories of government.

No tradition has been regarded as sacrosanct. Every dogma underlying human thought and action has been put on trial.

In such a mental climate it was impossible that the bases of morals and religion should not be brought to the bar of investigation, and, as a result, the Bible, the foundation of the Christian faith, has been challenged as never before in the history of the Christian era to justify its claims as the Word of God.

Doleful Prophecies of the Bible's Fate

By the mid-nineteenth century, as a result of the pincer movement led, on the one hand, by materialistic science, and, on the other, by the German higher criticism, doleful prophecies were being made as to the fate of the Bible and the Christian faith.

Canon Liddon, for example, lecturing in Oxford in the late sixties of last century, said of the outlook in Britain:

"The vast majority of our countrymen still shrink with sincere dread from anything like an explicit rejection of Christianity. Yet no-one who hears what goes on in daily conversation, and who is moderately conversant with the tone of some of the leading organs of public opinion, can doubt the existence of a widespread unsettlement of religious belief."

On the Continent, Dr. Gerhard Ulhorn sounded this discouraging note:

"Since the first days of the church, when she



A fine example of an old sixteenth century chained Bible.

BACK TO

By W. L.

had to defend her faith against heathen calumny and heathen science, the attacks upon Christianity and the church have never been so manifold and so powerful as at the present time. The contest is no longer upon single questions, such as whether this or that conception of Christianity is the more correct, but the very existence of Christianity is at stake."

When many avowed Christian ministers and leaders capitulated to the attackers and accepted the new critical views of the Bible, it was naturally not long before their hearers in the pews began to wonder whether it was any use going to church at all. And today the dire results of the apostasy of the pulpit are to be seen in the fact that but a fraction of the population of one-time



a recent exhibition in Westminster Abbey.

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THE BIBLE!

immerson

Christian lands ever enter the doors of the house of God or read the Scriptures in their own homes.

No sooner, however, had the secularists begun to congratulate themselves on their victory over what they described as medieval obscurantism, than the new philosophy of scientific utopianism was in its turn challenged by the tragic events of the first half of the twentieth century. And under the impact of two world wars and the resultant political, industrial, and social chaos, those who so confidently asserted that the world had no need of the Bible or the Christian faith, have discovered that their new gods of science and education have failed them and that they are confronted with the imminent collapse of the whole fabric of civilization.

OCTOBER 15, 1953

"In the nineteenth century," declared Barbara Ward in a B.B.C. broadcast, "all our thinking was on the whole fairly optimistic about the future of man in society, progress was thought to be inevitable, science was opening up the horizons of production and creation, and man by education and by literacy would learn to govern himself and to create the good society. That spate of optimism, which was new in the history of man, has been followed by disasters on the scale of two world wars, of the concentration camp, of the appalling horrors that man has committed against man in the last decade. So from extreme optimism we were suddenly confronted with extreme disaster."

Daniel Webster was indeed speaking prophetically to his fellow Americans when he uttered the warning: "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper: but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, who can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity."

Now that the fearful harvest of unbelief is being reaped, it is coming to be recognized that the confident claims of the secularists, the misguided conclusions of the critics, and their all-too-hasty acceptance by many of the religious leaders of a few generations ago, were all wrong. And today statesmen, scientists, and theologians are seeking to undo the grievous harm their predecessors have done to the Bible and are pleading for a return to the teachings of the Book of God for the reinforcement of a civilization fast drifting to ruin.

"We are at the bedside of a dying world," says Dr. Harold Roberts, "and we are beginning to see the things which really matter."

No more penetrating a summary of modern man's fearful mistakes and his dire need has been penned in recent times than these words of General Omar Bradley:

"With the monstrous weapons man already has, humanity is in danger of being trapped in this world by its moral adolescence. Our knowledge of science has clearly outstripped our capacity to control it. We have too many men of science; too few men of God. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. Man is stumbling blindly through a spiritual darkness while toying with the precious secrets of life and death. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace,

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more about killing than we know about living. This is our twentieth century's claim to distinction and to progress."

"The real trouble is that we have forgotten God," said a speaker at a conference on juvenile delinquency, in London. "Until this country as a whole comes back once more to God, and to Christian standards, we will never heal this running sore which is going through the country."

Declared the British Minister of Education of the late Labour government to a conference of secondary school masters:

"Perhaps the one great book which has been more neglected than any other is the Bible itself."

"Man's rebellion against his Creator," asserts a recent pronouncement of the British Council of Churches, "has reached such a point that, unless stayed, it will bring self-destruction upon him. . . . This is the hour to listen afresh to the Word of God, who is the Lord of history."

To these appeals of statesmen, soldiers, educators, and others has been added the gracious appeal of more than one royal personage.

Princess Wilhelmina of the Netherlands in a broadcast last year declared:

"In this time of confusion and chaos everybody should understand that this is due, above all, to a spiritual crisis which the world is undergoing.

And that a spiritual crisis can only be solved along spiritual lines and by spiritual means. . . . The solution for a better future for mankind can only be found by living and acting according to the teaching of Christ."

While in a message to the United Evangelical Exhibition in London, Her Majesty the Queen Mother, then Queen, said:

"I can truly say that the King and I long to see the Bible back where it ought to be, as a guide and comfort in the homes and lives of our people. From our own experience we know what the Bible can mean for personal life."

A Noted Agnostic's Confession

That men are today listening afresh to the message of the Bible as the Word of the living God is evident from reports which are coming to us from many walks of life and levels of society—even in the most unexpected places.

In his last book, *The Recovery of Belief*, the late Dr. C. E. M. Joad, who was once described as "an arrogant, left-wing agnostic, proud of his mastery of every argument of irreligion," tells of the opening of his spiritual eyes and of his progress from unbelief to the new faith which he held when he died.

"The rationalist-optimist philosophy, by the light of which I had hitherto done my best to live," he wrote, "came to seem intolerably trivial and superficial—a shallow-rooted plant which growing to maturity amid the lush and leisured optimism of the nineteenth century, was quite unfitted to withstand the bleaker winds that blow through ours. I abandoned it, and in abandoning it found myself a Christian."—Page 82.

There surely is a special significance, too, in the number of new English versions of the Bible which have been produced in recent years.

In Britain there has been Moffatt's translation, the New Testament in Basic English, and the whole Bible translation by Mgr. Ronald Knox. Besides these there have been numerous Bible anthologies like *The Bedside Bible*, *The Bible Designed to be Read as Literature*, and *The Bible for Today*.

In America the best known new translations have been The Twentieth Century New Testament and Goodspeed's New Testament. The Revised Standard Version of the New Testament was issued in 1946, and just a few months ago the Revised American Standard
(Continued on back page.)

This Bible in an American bus station is opened to a different page every day for passers-by to read.



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When the day of grace ends the final vials of the wrath of God will be poured out.

The Wrath of the Lamb

By J. A. McMillan

★ JOHN introduces his sixth wonder or sign by saying: "I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." Rev. 15:1. These judgments are those enumerated against the worshippers of the beast or antichrist. The Lord declares: "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation." Rev. 14:10. These seven plagues are therefore God's judgment on those who deliberately flout His last offers of mercy and join forces with the antichristian powers that are determined to overthrow the government of God.

The seven last plagues, like the ten plagues poured out on the gods of Egypt, are poetic justice on the forces of evil. The Lord said to Moses: "For I will pass through the land of

Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord." Exod. 12:12. Similarly, when the seven last plagues are poured out upon those who have impugned God's character and sought to overthrow His law, the redeemed will sing: "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest." Rev. 15:3, 4.

The Seven Wonders of the Revelation.—6

When Mercy's Door Has Closed

Another point to note about the plagues is that they are poured out following the close of probation. The decree will go forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:11, 12. Every character will then be irrevocably fixed and all destinies sealed. This is further suggested by the statement: "And no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." Rev. 15:8. To the last generation, therefore, the Lord appeals: "Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Zeph. 2:2, 3. The seven last plagues in Egypt did not affect Israel. (See Exodus 8:22-24.) So the last plagues of God's judgments will fall only on the adherents of Antichrist. (Rev. 18:4.)

The first five vials are poured out on the earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun, and the kingdom of the beast. Each of these is aimed at a particular sin of those to be punished. "Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Prov. 1:31. They sought to enforce the mark of the beast, now they are marked, "now their own doings have beset them about." Hosea 7:2; Rev. 16:2. They thirsted for the blood of God's people, so they have blood to drink. (Rev. 13:15; 16:5, 6. See also Isaiah 49:26.) They loved darkness in preference to the light of God's truth, so their world shall be plunged into darkness. (Rev. 16:10.) The ancient woe will be relived: "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isa. 3:11.

Our hearts sorrow as we contemplate the dreadful fruitage of sin. The only one who gloats over all this untold misery is its real author, Satan. Again and again, the Lord has pleaded with mankind to turn from iniquity. These plagues are simply the inevitable result of iniquity. "As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come." Prov. 26:2. When mankind grieves away the Spirit of God,

such iniquity will break out that these plagues are demanded to hold sin in check. (Rev. 16:2, 9, 11.)

Armageddon

The sixth plague causes the drying up of the Euphrates and the gathering of the kings of the earth to Har-Megiddon. This will be "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Rev. 16:14. The Euphrates here must be symbolic, since the actual river would impede no modern army. In Isaiah's time it represented the kingdom of Assyria. (Isa. 8:7.) Today, it must stand for the Arab kingdoms of the Middle East. Har-Megiddon must also be symbolic since there is no mountain (Har) of Megiddon known in Scripture or geography but only the *valley* of Megiddo. (See 2 Chronicles 35:22.) Joel speaks of the gathering of the nations to the valley of Jehoshaphat. (Joel 3:9-12.) Jeremiah describes with startling vividness the part Jehovah will play in that day. "You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword to fall on all the inhabitants of the world, says the Lord of hosts."

The final plague introduces God's natural and atomic weapons. Hailstones of fifty pounds in weight will come crashing down on the cities that have corrupted their way before the Lord. (Rev. 16:21.) The Lord asked Job: "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" Job 38:22, 23. Then, when God splits the atoms of His armoury, "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10.

Watch and Be Ready

What is the lesson for the humble child of God? Surely it is to heed the message in the very centre of this prophecy. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Rev. 16:15. This is the most vital message of this sixth sign—not to have one's heart failing for fear and for looking at the things that are coming on the earth, but to have it sustained by faith because one is looking for Someone who is coming in the air.

The message of the seven last plagues, as indeed of all the visions recorded in the book of Revelation, is that Jesus is coming again—and soon. Therefore, let us watch and keep our garments. Every Christian should be able to say with confidence: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my

soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isa. 61:10. Let no propaganda, however subtle, however persuasive or powerful, rob us of our beautiful garments. God grant that we may be eternally vigilant, ever on the watch, that we may be ready for our Lord's return.

What Is Coming?

(Continued from page 3.)

counsels of His own will. As we see His purpose amid the events of every day we shall face the future without fear.

Where Jesus Christ is there is also peace. His word to us is, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27. There can be no peace in the world while the nations are divided. Peace within the nation cannot exist unless the community is at peace. Peace in the community rests upon peace in the home. We can

never live at peace even with those who are nearest and dearest to us unless we are at peace with ourselves. The resolution of the inner conflicts of individuals is the only way to permanent peace in the world. That is God's way. Let us invite the abiding presence of the Prince of peace into our hearts to subdue our fears and inspire our faith.

How Many "Laws" are there in the Bible?

(Continued from page 7.)

his Saviour, and it reveals the power of God in the one-time sinner's life when by grace "the righteousness of the law" is "fulfilled" as he walks not by "the flesh," but by "the Spirit." Rom. 8:4.

The ceremonial ordinances, on the other hand, were a temporary law symbolizing the process of redemption. They were carried out by the sinner before Calvary as an evidence of faith in Christ, but are no longer necessary after the actual uprising of Christ upon the cross.

The ceremonial law was temporary and dispensable. The moral law is eternal, unchangeable, and indispensable.



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.

THERE IS ONLY ONE COMPLETE ANSWER

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

Gifts from Above

By Gwynn Goldie

SALLY SMYTHE was playing in the garden with her friend Roberta when she heard her mother calling her from the house.

"Sally, darling, come along in now, it's time for you to do your practising."

"Oh bother!" exclaimed Sally, as she jumped onto the lower branch of the chestnut tree and swung herself to and fro. "I'm always having to practise, practise, practise!"

"But you're awfully good at playing the piano," said Roberta. "I don't think I would mind practising if I played as well as you."

"Hurry up, Sally," her mother called again.

"Oh, Mummy, can I have five

more minutes in the garden?" Sally called back.

"Five minutes if you come in instantly," answered Mrs. Smythe; and Sally gave a whoop of delight.

"Hurray, now what shall we do? I know. Let's be Nosey Parkers and see what the old lady is doing who has just come to live next door. We can see into her garden from this chestnut tree. She's awfully queer. I think she must be a bit funny in the head. She wanders about her garden, then she stops and cocks her head on one side as if she is listening to something."

Roberta laughed.

"Nobody seems to have seen her out yet. Mummy says she is

going to call on her now she has been here a few weeks."

"Yes, so is mine," replied Sally as she climbed up into the branches of the chestnut tree. Then she whispered to Roberta as she climbed up beside her, "Don't make any noise. I don't think Mummy would be very pleased if she knew what we were doing."

Sally, of course, knew very well that her mother would be very sad if she knew what they were doing; but Sally was feeling rather naughty that day. She had had two bad marks at school, which had made her very cross, and now in five minutes she would have to go indoors and practise her horrid scales and exercises.

"Can you see her?" whispered Roberta.

"No, I — oh, yes, I can. She's sitting in a deck chair on the lawn. Doesn't she look a funny little thing?"

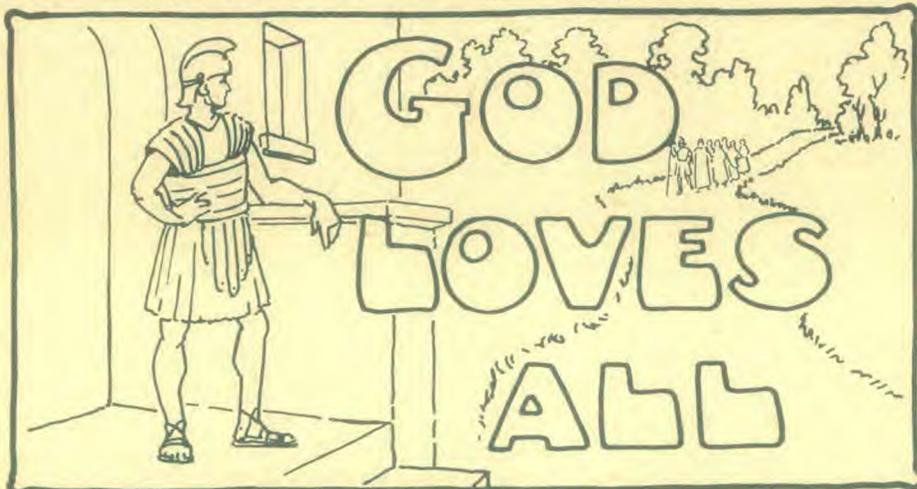
Roberta giggled.

"She's just getting out of her chair. She's going across the lawn. Oh Sally, look, she's tripped up and fallen down!"

They watched the little old lady pick herself up and dust herself down.

"How funny," murmured Sally. "She just tripped up over nothing at all. Whatever is she doing now?"

They watched with startled



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 29th. (In case OUR TIMES arrives late, still send your entry. All attempts will be considered.)

eyes. The old lady was kneeling down by one of the flowerbeds, gently touching the flowers, but she did not pick any of them.

"Sally, Sally, come along in now," called Mother. Sally gave a sigh as she heard her mother's voice.

"I shall have to go in now. Oh bother having to practise." They climbed down the tree, and Roberta said good-bye.

"Now, hurry up, darling," said Mrs. Smythe, as Sally came into the house. "I've decided to call on Miss Beaton, the lady who has come to live next door. If you like you can come with me."

"Oh good," cried Sally. "Does that mean I need not do my practising?"

"Yes, you need not do it today," said Mrs. Smythe putting on her hat. "But you're very naughty about your practising. It grieves me very much to see you so lazy about it."

A few minutes later Sally and her mother were walking up the drive of the house next door. They rang the front door bell, and a smart looking maid opened the door.

"Is Miss Beaton in?" asked Mrs. Smythe.

"Yes, madam, she is in the garden. Would you like to come through?"

They followed the maid through the hall and out into the garden where Miss Beaton was sitting. Sally looked at her eagerly, and was surprised to see what a sweet, kind face she had.

"Don't get up," said Mrs. Smythe, as she held out her hand. "I'm Mrs. Smythe, and this is my little girl Sally. We live next door."

"I'm so glad to meet you," said the little old lady. "I've wanted to meet your little girl very much. I wonder if she will believe me if I tell her the greatest pleasure I have had since I have been here is to listen to her playing the piano?"

Sally stared at her in surprise.

"When I hear you commence your practising I bring my chair into the garden," went on Miss Beaton. "And I listen to every scale and exercise you play. I expect you think I am very, very strange, Sally? And I expect you dislike playing your scales very much, just as I did when I was a little girl. But you know, God has given you a very wonderful gift. You play the piano very beautifully; and the nicest way you can say 'Thank you,' to God for such a gift is to work hard, so that one day you will bring pleasure and blessing to all who hear."

"It's nice of you to say such

A Boy Can Help

A boy can help his mother
By making his bed each day.
Before other children's voices
Call him out to play.

He can also help his daddy
To polish up the car,
And help to mow the lawn
Where the four-leaf clovers are.

A boy can play with sister
And read her stories, too.
Oh, yes, there are a lot of things,
A little boy can do.

Mary Gustafson.

nice things," said Mrs. Smythe, smiling proudly at Sally.

Miss Beaton nodded her head.

"I had your gift, Sally," she said. "But I never did anything about it. I was too lazy I suppose. When I was grown-up I would have given anything to have had that gift again, but it was too late then. When I was twenty I lost my sight. I have been blind, quite blind ever since."

"Oh, no!" cried Sally with horror, as she realized in a flash why the little old lady tripped in her garden and fell, and why she knelt down on the grass to feel the beauty of the flowers with her hands. She could see none of the beautiful things that others could see.

They spent half an hour talk-

ing to Miss Beaton, and when they got up to go, Sally, who had been thinking very hard, said eagerly: "I'm going home to do my practising. I shall try extra hard today. Will you be listening to me?"

"Of course I shall," said Miss Beaton. "I hope you will play for me every day. It gives me so much happiness."

"I will! All my pieces and all my scales and all my exercises," promised Sally, and she really meant what she said.

When she got home she sat down happily at the piano. The little old lady next door had shown her just how wonderful was the gift that God had given her, and what happiness it could bring to others.

Results of Competition No. 17

Prize-winners. — Muriel Forder, 101 Motum Road, Larkman Lane, Norwich; Andrew Mustard, P.O. Box 480, Kumasi, Gold Coast.

Honourable mention. — Evelyn Sanders (St. Austell); Richard Payne (Cheltenham); Maureen West (Norton-sub-Hamdon); Colin Doggett (Norwich); Margaret Johnson (Rochester); Jean Morgan (Manchester); Heather Payne (Cheltenham); Eleonora Baron (Church); Carol Clift (Leicester); Roselee Hedman (Kenya) Clive Maybery (St. Albans); Trevor Goddard (Iver); Christine Collins (Rickmansworth).

Those who tried hard. — Margaret Melin (Grimsby); Elizabeth Merry (New Abington); Douglas Smith (London); Greta Clarke (Rhondda); Ann Robinson (Manchester); David Kirk (Cambridge); David Hocking (Liskeard); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Amy Randlesome (Stockton); Barbara Kent (Lowestoft); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Siegfried Baron (Church); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Elva Eaglen (Norwich); Maureen Robbens (Lowestoft); Rachel Hayward (Pennington); Antony Peart (Bishop's Cleeve); Margaret Launston (Dublin); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Eleanor Forgan (Edinburgh); Helen Collins (Liverpool); Sylvia Parks (Trindon Village); Margaret Peart (Bishop's Cleeve); Stuart Payne (Cheltenham).

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Straws in the Wind

Soviet and Middle East

COMMENTING in a recent broadcast talk on the reopening of diplomatic relations with Israel and reassurances of Soviet friendship to the Arabs, Richard Goold-Adams asked, "Is the new regime in Moscow going to play a more active rôle in the Middle East than Stalin did? I do not know. But it is worth keeping an eye open for such a move."

Science Now Humble

THE new humility of science and modern scientists was revealed in Sir Edward Appleton's presidential address to the British Association, when he admitted that the things which science can analyse and classify are only part of the fabric of life. "We must not forget," he said, "that there are other values and other experiences. . . . Today we stand in need of these enduring and sustaining values of the spirit more than ever."

Problem of Hunger

THE "most urgent problem" today, asserts Mr. Harold Wilson in his new book, *The War on World Poverty*, "is not war, or Communism, or the cost of living, or taxation. It is hunger. Over 1,300,000,000 people, something like two-thirds of the world's population, are living in conditions of acute hunger."

Religions of the World

AT a conference of Churches of Christ in London, Dr. G. Edwin Osborne from Oklahoma, U.S.A., stated that out of every hundred people in the world sixty-six were not of Christ, twenty

were Roman Catholics, eight were Protestants, and six were of the Orthodox Eastern Churches.

Many More "Dead Sea Scrolls"

LECTURING to the Palestine Exploration Fund in London, Mr. G. Lankaster Harding, Director of Antiquities in Jordan, declared that many more caves in the vicinity of the Dead Sea had been searched and an astonishing quantity of hidden documents had come to light. The biblical fragments alone represent some "seventy different books." It will take a long time, he said, to carefully study them.

Back to The Bible!

(Continued from page 10.)

Version of the whole Bible came off the presses and is enjoying a phenomenal circulation.

Books are not produced unless there is a demand for them. The numerous new translations of the Bible must testify to a new awareness that it has a message for our time.

Today, therefore, the Bible is arising phoenix-like from the fires of criticism and scorn and is coming again to be recognized for what it truly is, the saving Word of God to a lost world.

In the articles which follow we shall tell the story of this remarkable "recovery of belief," to use the pertinent phrase of Dr. Joad's own personal confession, and survey once again the impregnable bastions of the fortress of the Word.

(Next Time:

"Restoring the Foundations.")

