

# SIGNS OF THE *Times*



VOLUME 79, NO. 29 AUGUST 5, 1952

**HOW TO UNDER-  
STAND THE BIBLE**

DEVANEY

# SIGNS OF THE Times

Editor . . . . . Arthur S. Maxwell  
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Vol. 79, No. 29

AUGUST 5, 1952

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### OUR COVER

Many a mother, anxious to bring up her children aright, is turning again to the Bible, seeking the guidance and help that others have found in it, or using it as a source of those fascinating and uplifting stories which children love to hear. Yet some who read fail to find what they are seeking and, becoming discouraged, wonder whether the Bible is such a wonderful book, after all. Be sure to read, "How to Understand the Bible," by Richard H. Utt, on page 5 of this issue.

CIRCULATION MANAGER . . . . . H. K. CHRISTMAN

Printed and published weekly (four issues a month) by the Pacific Press Publishing Association at Mountain View, California, U.S.A. Entered as second-class matter September 15, 1904, at the post office at Mountain View, California, under Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, and authorized September 18, 1918.

RATES in U. S. A.: Single copy, one year . . . . . \$2.25  
 Clubs of five or more to one address, each . . . . . 2.00  
 To Canada and other countries taking extra postage:  
 Single copy, one year (U. S. funds) . . . . . \$2.75  
 Clubs of five or more to one address, each (U. S. funds) . . . . . 2.25

Please make all checks and money orders payable to *Signs of the Times*, Mountain View, California.

In requesting change of address, please give both old and new addresses. No papers are sent except on paid subscriptions.

## Your Bible Questions Answered

### Wine of God's Wrath

What is meant by "the wine of the wrath of God"? Revelation 14:10. A. D. D.

Verses 9 and 10 read in part as follows: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation."

In verse 8, Babylon, the apostate church, is said to have made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, which represents her false teachings and practices. The figurative language used in these verses is not new, for in Jeremiah 51:7 Babylon is said to be a cup in the Lord's hand whereof the nations have drunk and become mad. This is repeated in spiritual Babylon in the book of Revelation.

As men have drunk wine of Babylon's cup, they will now drink of the wine of God's wrath, which is poured out into the cup of His indignation. God's judgments before this have had the purpose of warning men of their wicked ways, and there has been hope of mercy if they would repent and turn to Him. In this final outpouring of the wine of His wrath there is no hope of another opportunity to repent. Thus His wine is said to be without mixture. This is an allusion to the custom of mixing water with wine to dilute it, but God's wine in its final outpouring will be undiluted. The wine of God's wrath is the seven last plagues, to be poured out by the seven angels of Revelation 16. C. D. U.

### House of David

What is meant by the "house of David"? Does this pertain in any way to King David? I. B.

House, meaning family or descendants, is a common Biblical expression, as in "house of Israel," and "house of the Rechabites." Leviticus 10:6; Ruth 4:11; Jeremiah 35:3. When the reference is to a king's house, it means dynasty. 2 Samuel 3:1; 1 Kings 15:29; 2 Kings 9:8.

The first use of the phrase "house of David" is in 1 Samuel 20:16. The reference is to David, who shortly before this had been anointed king. 1 Samuel 16:1-13. After that it is of frequent occurrence. Some of the Messianic prophecies are made to the house of David, as in Isaiah 22:22, and Zechariah 12:10. Promises to David and his house were fulfilled in Christ. Luke 1:32. C. D. U.

### Publishing Jesus' Miracles

Why did Christ tell one man to go and publish what great things God had done for him, and charge another not to tell anyone? Luke 8:39, 56. Mrs. E. M. K.

The different instructions were doubtless due to circumstances. Gadara, where the demoniac was healed, was east of the Jordan and away from the Jewish centers in which there was growing opposition to Jesus and His work. Therefore, Jesus could send the man to his own people, and his testimony would be effective in opening a way in that new territory for the gospel. Verse 40.

Jairus, whose daughter was raised to life, was a ruler of the synagogue. For him to circulate among the Jews a report of the miracle of raising his daughter might create greater opposition to Jesus and hatred for Jairus himself. We have an example of this in the resurrection of Lazarus, which, instead of convincing the enemies of Jesus that He was the Son of God, only hardened them in their unbelief. John 11:52, 53. C. D. U.



A test model of the Douglas Skyrocket is loaded on a C-124 Globemaster for a flight from El Segundo, California, to Washington, D.C.

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## THE FLIGHT OF TIME

### Voices of Doom

EVER since the explosion of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945 the voices of scientists, statesmen, educators, and preachers have been raised in warning of the dire new threat to civilization. Again and again they have tried to stir the listless populace into a realization of the seriousness of the peril that confronts them.

Leland Stowe has told us that, thanks to the bomb, "Armageddon and Doomsday are now suspended over the heads of our generation."

Dr. Hutchins has written: "We must acknowledge that a world crisis exists—not next week nor tomorrow, but now, today, for there is very little time remaining."

Vincent Sheen has said: "The point of development at which we now stand is one in which the most extreme disaster has come within the range of possibility: the end of life on this star."

And Paul Hutchison: "The world as fact is a terrifying, doom-threatened reality which no informed mind can dismiss."

Latest of these warnings of approaching disaster is that of Stephen White. Writing in *Look* magazine for June 3, 1952, he reveals the truly frightening facts concerning the race for atomic weapons now proceeding between the two greatest powers in the world today.

The colossal expenditure upon new atomic plants in Georgia, Kentucky, Idaho, and in the Ohio Valley has become necessary, he says, because the other chief contestant in the race is forging ahead and may soon leave the United States behind.

No longer is it considered difficult to make atomic weapons. Indeed, says Stephen White, "it is a great deal easier to make them than anyone ever believed. Strangely enough, this had been true from the outset. Every difficulty had a way of vanishing just as soon as it began to seem insurmountable. . . ."

"In recent months, an even greater truth has become known. It is now no secret that the United States has learned to make small atom bombs that can be flown in quantity from a carrier. . . . Maneuvers carried out regularly by the Army simulate conditions under which atom bombs are used tactically.

"It is clear that such achievements are today run-of-the-mill. We can make big bombs or little ones, long or short, wide or narrow. We can shoot them out of a cannon if we want to, or load them into guided missiles. . . ."

"Not long ago some of this was feared impossible, and all of it was thought to be years or decades away."

While these developments have been taking place in the United States they

have been proceeding with equal, if not greater, speed elsewhere. For "the laws of nature know no geography. It is no harder to make a small bomb in the Urals than in the Rockies." And "any nation that can build plenty of MIG's can build plenty of A-bombs. We must face the fact."

So the desperate race for the most deadly weapons of history proceeds with unexampled fever and a reckless disregard of cost. In Stephen White's opinion, "The time is only a few years off, at most," when the two great rivals, each standing for a different concept of life, "will face each other, each capable of smashing the other in a matter of hours or days."

"If that time arrives," he says, "with both countries as distrustful and as hostile as they are today, there can be only one outcome: a war in which civilization will perish."

Summarizing his conclusions in a final word of warning, this author says:

*"One thing is certain: We are on the edge of a period of extreme gravity, in which decisions must be made here and abroad that will determine the survival of modern civilization. And this period will be as short as it is grave. It begins now. . . . It ends in a few years when both . . . are confident of their ability to deliver their bombs. In those few years, means must be found of permitting the two nations to live at peace. If, at the end of those few years, the means have not been found, we are all destroyed."*

We have quoted at some length from this article because it re-emphasizes, most convincingly, a truth which the *Signs of the Times* has been proclaiming for many years, that history's greatest crisis is at hand.

We have been accused of being prophets of doom, like Jonah, when he predicted the fall of Nineveh, or Jeremiah, when he announced the coming destruction of Jerusalem, or Noah, when he foretold the doom of the antediluvian world.

But today we are not alone in sounding the alarm of coming disaster. Voices of doom are multiplying. Thinking men and women in many walks of life are beginning to realize the significance of present trends and are expressing the gravest fears for the future.

Surely the time has come for a great awakening—for a mighty message of warning to be given to mankind that shall arouse the careless multitudes from their indifference, their self-indulgence, and their lust for "bread and circuses,"

while yet there is time for them to repent and seek the Lord.

And what more fitting message could be proclaimed in such a time as this than that of Revelation 14:7: "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"?

How true it is that the hour of judgment has come! The judgment of the nations. The judgment of our civilization. The judgment of the world.

The hour of final crisis, so long foretold by the prophets of old, is upon us. We are in the last days. By signs in heaven and on earth, by "distress of nations, with perplexity," by the fear that is gripping the hearts of men as they look ahead at the things that are about to come to pass, the Lord of history is trying to convince us that the end is near, even at the doors. Luke 21:25-27.

And in these closing years of time He bids us prepare for what is about to happen: to build up our moral and spiritual

## "Spiritual Bill of Rights"

**A**N INTERFAITH "Spiritual Bill of Rights" applicable to daily living in this atomic age was adopted by the state chaplains of the American Legion at their national conference in Indianapolis last spring as the background for a "Back to God" movement. They drafted a blueprint of daily religious practices to advance the vital objectives of regular church attendance, personal and family devotions, and religious training of youth in the home and in the church.

At the same time the chaplains recommended to the National Executive Committee of the Legion that it create a permanent National Commission on Religious Emphasis. The conference also urged that adequate funds be provided at all American Legion organizations levels to advance the "Back to God" movement. The Legion will use the press, radio, television, and other kinds of publicity to carry their program into

by the conference reads as follows:

"Religion is the bond by which men rightly relate themselves to their Creator. It includes the sum total of all things to be believed and to be done in the service of God. It is that part of the virtue of justice upon which the morality of individuals, families, and nations is based. Its basic concern is with what is right and not merely with what is useful or pleasant. In short, it is a virtue, a thing that makes men good.

"Prayer is an act of religion by which men worship God and petition His guidance and help. Prayer is necessary for men who desire salvation and who need peace of soul and heart to carry forward their mission in this present life. Prayer is the language of men to God. When man speaks it properly, God listens. Often there are no words, but God hears. Sometimes the sweetest prayer is an offering of the soul to God in silence. And God's filling of the heart with hope, silently, is His sweetest answer. Of all languages, prayer is the most eloquent and powerful. When invoked by the lips alone, God does not answer. Prayer is of the heart.

"The family is the basic unit of society. It is the 'atom of civilization' which must not be split or destroyed. . . . The nation which has wholesome family living is a virile nation. The well-being of a family will depend upon the practice of religion and prayer by its members. Father, mother, and children need to worship God as individuals and as members of a family group. Through the practice of family prayer there is developed a partnership of faith and hope, of tolerance and mutual love, which sustains and keeps the family together."

These suggestions and declarations do not need much comment, but we feel that the organization deserves commendation for giving its influence to a much-needed revival of home religion. We are accustomed to such appeals from the pulpit and religious journals, but in this case the good counsel is all the more impressive because the Legion is not a religious organization. One does not ordinarily think of it as being concerned with religious matters. Therefore, when it recognizes the need of religion in everyday life, it would be well for all of us, especially professing Christians, to ask ourselves whether we have been doing all we should do to promote such objectives by faithfulness in our religious duties in the home and in the church, and whether we have given our children the religious training they need to enable them to withstand the temptations they will meet in the world.

(Continued on page 15)

SIGNS of the TIMES



A five-inch rocket, fired from a United States Naval vessel, burns brightly as it speeds toward an enemy-held village on the east coast of North Korea.

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resources without which we cannot hope to endure the evil days ahead. He invites us to turn again to Him; to worship Him as Creator, Redeemer, and coming King; to permit His Holy Spirit to come into our hearts to cleanse us from sin and make us fit to live with Him forever; to lift up our heads with confidence and hope, knowing that "the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Luke 21:31.

A. S. M.

the home, and it will co-operate with the churches of all denominations.

The chaplains' plan recommended that every family should provide for a daily period of prayer in the home and for regular worship at church, that families should petition God's blessing at every meal, and that parents, by their example, should encourage the personal prayerful devotion of their children.

A "Declaration of Devotion" adopted

# HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

by RICHARD H. UTT

*Five Keys to This Treasury of Truth*



KEYSTONE

"THERE is a Book," said Patrick Henry, "worth all other books that were ever published." Of this same Book Abraham Lincoln testified, "It is the best gift which God has given to man." The considered opinion of Sir Isaac Newton was: "I account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy." John R. Green, prominent English historian, declared, "As a mere literary monument the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue." According to H. L. Mencken, "The Bible is unquestionably the most beautiful book in the world."<sup>1</sup>

To this list of superlatives might be added many others: The Bible was the first major book to be printed with movable type. It is now published in far more languages than is any other—almost two hundred, and parts of it in over nine hundred others. As a best seller the Bible knows no rival whatever: current Bible sales are estimated at thirty million a year; almost one a second.<sup>2</sup> No other book has ever had such a host of friends and devotees.

But it is equally true that no other book has had so many enemies and detractors. Many a skeptic, with pen and vitriol in hand, has sought to smear the pages of this widely acclaimed volume. Writes H. L. Hastings: "The Bible is a book which has been [allegedly] refuted, demolished, overthrown, and exploded more times than any other book you ever heard of. Every little while somebody starts up and upsets this Book."<sup>3</sup>

Strange indeed that the very book which is hailed by some as "best," "no-

blest," "most sublime," and "most beautiful," is at the same time accused by others of being full of forgeries, contradictions, and falsehoods! While millions down through the centuries have chosen rather to die than to disobey its teachings, and other tens of millions testify that the Bible has rescued them from despair, fear, superstition, and even cannibalism, its enemies would reduce it to an idle collection of Hebrew tales! Why this extreme difference of attitude? To account for it we must answer the question, "How should the Bible be studied rightly to understand and interpret it?"

## The Continuing Christ

Beyond the sea is Galilee,  
And ways which Jesus trod,  
And hidden there are those high hills  
Where He communed with God;  
Yet on the plains of common life  
Through all the world of men,  
The voice that once said, "Follow Me,"  
Speaks to our hearts again.

Gethsemane and Calvary,  
And death and bitter loss—  
Are these but echoes drifting down  
From a forgotten cross?  
Nay, Lord, for all our living sins  
Thy cross is lifted up;  
And as of old we hear Thee say,  
"Can ye, too, drink My cup?"

O Life that seems so long ago,  
And yet is ever new,  
The fellowship of love with Thee,  
Through all the years is true.  
O Master over death and time,  
Reveal Thyself, we pray;  
And as before amongst Thine own,  
So dwell with us today!

—W. Russell Bowie.

If a person with no musical preparation whatever should approach a grand piano and run his fingers over the keys, he would doubtless produce a series of unpleasant, discordant sounds, or at best succeed in playing a simple C scale. But the sensitive fingers of a Liszt or Paderewski would almost effortlessly bring forth from the same instrument a glorious flood of harmony and beauty. It would ill behoove that person who, through ignorance of piano technique, could produce nothing but noise, to blame either the skilled craftsmen who built the piano, or the piano itself, for his failure.

In the same way, he who approaches the Bible with an ignorant, scornful attitude will find only discord in it. He takes nothing to the Bible, and gets nothing from it in return. But this is his own fault, not that of the Bible or its Author. Just as there are rules for playing the piano, there are rules for understanding the mysteries of the Bible. Nor can these rules be mastered in a day. The Bible writers were not shallow men, and the Omniscient One who inspired their writings is still less so. Let the idea be forever abandoned that the Bible is a book, which, like a novel or a "comic" book, can be carelessly skimmed through once and discarded, with all possible meaning derived from one hasty reading. One cannot appreciate Milton or Shakespeare that way and much less the Bible. To understand the Bible the following rules from the Bible itself must be followed:

1. "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way." Psalm 25:9. A sensible college

student does not enter the chemistry classroom with a haughty, contemptuous air, hoping to catch his professor in errors and misconstrue his words. Rather, he enters humbly, as a learner, to listen while an authority in chemistry speaks. He does not assume he knows all about the subject as he begins to study it. This same rule must govern Bible study. Who has the right to enter into audience with the infinite God with a critical, self-sufficient bearing? The meek, humble student, and no other, will He teach.

"The student of the Bible should be taught to approach it in the spirit of a learner. We are to search its pages, not for proof to sustain our opinions, but in order to know what God says."<sup>4</sup>

Someone wrote in to one of America's most prominent radio preachers: "The Bible speaks of the Hittites. Don't you know that history is silent concerning them—in fact, they didn't exist?"

The preacher replied, "Somebody is about fifty or sixty years behind the times. The Bible is history—and it mentions the Hittites. . . . And now modern archaeologists have dug up the capital city of the great Hittite Empire and have begun to decipher their strange records."<sup>5</sup>

The existence of the Hittites was just as much a fact even before it was proved

by archaeologists. The Bible recorded those facts. Those living a century or two ago who read the Bible humbly, in a teachable spirit, learned about the Hittites, and thus possessed knowledge in advance of modern discoveries. If others at the same time read skeptically, determined to believe nothing which could not be proved by men, they died disbelieving the story of the Hittites, and thus died in self-imposed ignorance of the facts. Is it not clear, then, why God can teach only the meek—only those who will listen and be taught?

2. "For precept must be upon precept, . . . line upon line; here a little, and there a little." Isaiah 28:10. In other words, the Bible should be used as its own commentary. Text should be compared with text, for each sheds light upon the other. This truth is the very base upon which Protestantism rests. At the Diet of Spires in 1529 the German princes presented their famous Protest, which included the words: "The Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts."<sup>6</sup>

Does this method work? William Miller, a deist and a doubter, gave it a thorough, sincere trial, and here is his report:

"I then devoted myself to prayer and to the reading of the word. I determined to lay aside all my prepossessions,

to thoroughly compare Scripture with Scripture, and to pursue its study in a regular and methodical manner. I commenced with Genesis, and read verse by verse, proceeding no faster than the meaning of the several passages should be so unfolded, as to leave me free from embarrassment respecting any mysticism or contradictions. Whenever I found anything obscure, my practice was to compare it with all collateral passages; and by the help of Cruden [a concordance], I examined all the texts of Scripture in which were found any of the prominent words contained in any obscure portion. Then by letting every word have its proper bearing on the subject of the text, if my view of it harmonized with every collateral passage in the Bible, it ceased to be a difficulty."<sup>7</sup>

The results of this painstaking study? Miller became a devout believer, and eventually a Baptist preacher. His skepticism died hard, but it died. Doubts vanish when the Bible is studied with an open mind, in the Bible's own prescribed way. There is no better way to study. There are no short cuts.

3. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. In order to learn what the Bible really teaches, the help of the Holy Spirit is indispensable. One who denies the reality of the Spirit merely because he cannot see or feel Him is like a dweller in the tropics who denies the existence of snow because he has never seen it and cannot imagine it. The fact remains that others have seen and felt snow, and know it is very real.

The doubter has never received the aid of the Holy Spirit because he has not placed himself in an attitude to receive Him. Others, who have humbly sought the help of this Representative of Christ, have received the understanding they have asked for. "Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:17.

He who views the stained-glass windows of a cathedral from the outside, in daytime, finds them ordinary and dull. He who views the same windows from within sees their splendor and beauty as the light shines through. Those who view the Scriptures with the light of the Holy Spirit shining through them find beauty and meaning throughout, while all others see nothing to admire.

4. "There are some things in them hard to understand, which ignorant unsteadfast people twist to their own ruin." 2 Peter 3:16, Goodspeed. This is self-evi-

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### Billions of Calls

Since the war, 1,851,000 new telephones have been installed in Western United States; and in 1951 alone 248,000,000 toll and long-distance calls were completed in that area, in addition to five and a half billion local calls.

### Gospels for Travelers

In California the American Bible Society has established Scripture outlets through the stations of the widely used Greyhound Bus Lines. Plastic containers holding about a hundred Gospel portions are used. More than 12,000 Gospels were distributed in fifty-three centers last year.

### Desalting Salt Water

What may prove to be the answer to an age-old problem has been announced by the president of Ionics, Inc. It is a method to take the salt out of sea water so as to make it available for irrigation. Designed with membranes of new plastic materials, and making use of electrical energy to influence the positive and negative charges of minerals in the water, the new technique may convert brackish or salt water to fresh for as low as six cents a thousand gallons, the developers hope.

### Quicker Uranium Detection

Ten times more efficient and five times faster than the old gamma-ray detecting devices is a new instrument announced by the Atomic Energy Commission for use in discovering uranium deposits. Named the "scintillation probe and detecting device," the cylinder is thirty inches long, with a two-inch diameter, and is lowered into test holes drilled in likely territory. Findings are indicated on a pen-line recorder. Several motor vehicles are being equipped with the new probes for full-scale field use.

### Television Blanket

Provisions for increasing the number of television stations in the United States from the present 108 to a possible 2,053 were announced recently by the United States Government in a forward-looking plan designed to prevent overlapping as future stations are developed. If the plan is ever fully realized, there will be outlets in 1,291 communities, and practically every corner of the nation and its possessions will be blanketed by the new communication system. For "educational use"—as distinguished from commercial telecasting—the ruling sets aside 242 outlets.

# CHRISTIANITY and Cannibalism



*Modern Triumphs of the Gospel in New Guinea*

by A. J. CAMPBELL

**T**RUE Christianity, with its positive gospel, has power to change, clean, renew, right down the human scale even to those who practice cannibalism.

Only within recent months has it become known that there are certain tribes in central New Guinea who have taken their cannibalism so far that not only do they eat any unfortunate enemy who may fall into their hands, but also *all of their own dead!* This may seem incredible, but it is actually true. The corpse is first washed in pig's blood, then cut up by the inhabitants in their village "square," and steam-cooked in bamboo

rods together with the flesh of the pig. In some instances even the bones are ground up and eaten. Upon being questioned, the people say, "Our mouths are our graves." But Christianity has arrived among these incredibly degraded people, with its message of decided betterment in this life and of eternal life in the hereafter, and very wonderful have been the results.

came heartily. The first few graves in the country have recently been dug. The majority of the people are now in favor of burial, but when the body is lowered into the grave the minority clamor to take the body back so that it may be cut up, cooked, and eaten. By the first gravesides some still argue as to whether or not they will continue to eat their dead according to custom.

In one place cannibalism completely disappeared within a few months. In others it continues, though to a much less extent. There the corpse, instead of being prepared for a cannibal death feast in the village square, is now taken off

What victories for Christianity are taking place in those dark cannibal lairs today! Recently twelve of these men followed their dark-skinned mission teacher out to the fringe of their country to witness a baptism, which was attended by three thousand other natives. Among those baptized were many who had given up polygamy, betel-nut chewing, and other evil habits in order to follow Christ, their new Master. Those twelve visitors witnessed that wonderful change with wide-open eyes and went back to their cannibal country wondering.

And so it is that, with strong strokes of the sword of the Spirit, the gospel cuts sin and degradation from the lives of these people. It is evident that it will not be very long before many of them will take the same step and will become, thanks to the body- and soul-saving power of the gospel of Christ, "have-been" cannibals.

A visiting native policeman arrived at one of those cannibal villages one day with orders to arrest two natives suspected of murder, for the government is also just entering this country. This policeman had not long been a Christian himself. He was provided with a hut in which to sleep for the night. Next morning many armed savages appeared about the door, threatening his life. This policeman is given the most difficult jobs, and knows no fear. He placed his rifle out of sight, instead of fingering the trigger as most would have done. Dropping to his knees before the open door and the menacing tribesmen, he prayed for them that God would help them to see the blessings of Christianity. Opening his eyes, he was greatly surprised to see that the threatening warriors had placed their weapons on the ground, disarmed by prayer!

"We have not seen anything like this before," they said. "We will do all you require of us." Thereupon they brought

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Tokum and his family, who are witnesses to the saving power of the gospel.

into the jungle for preparation, and eaten there.

In some instances these people will interrupt their eating of human flesh to attend worship in the new and humble village church, only to return to their horrible repast. Yet they are welcoming Christianity, and thus cannibalism is meeting its doom, as degraded beings come to see their Creator again in the person of the Son of God, who died for them to provide a way of escape from such appalling depths of depravity.

Native missionaries are now working among these people, and have been wel-



# Christ Warns of Trouble Ahead

*Sixth in the Series, "Christ  
and Tomorrow," an Introduction  
to the Study of the Book of  
Revelation*

HAVING permitted John to glimpse some of "the things which shall be hereafter" through the symbolism of the seven churches, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets, Christ opens before him one of the deep mysteries of the universe—the age-long controversy between Satan and Himself and its dire consequences for the world and the church.

John learns the terrible truth that there was once "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." Revelation 12:7-9.

It is hard to think of "war" in heaven, or to associate the gentle Prince of Peace with conflict; but conflict there was. Exactly when it began, or what was its nature, is not made clear; but from the prophet Isaiah we learn something of its origin, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" says the inspired prophet. "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:12-14.

From the prophet Ezekiel we learn that Lucifer was "the anointed cherub that covereth," a suggestion of the exalted position he occupied near the throne of God. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast

by ARTHUR S. MAXWELL

created, till iniquity was found in thee." Ezekiel 28:14, 15.

This identifies the fountainhead of sin, the source of the great rebellion against the government of God. All evil is traceable to that first thought of pride in Lucifer's heart. Says the prophet, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Coveting the honor which the Father had bestowed upon His Son, Lucifer aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield. Jealousy fed the flames of discontent until dissatisfaction became open discord. Beautiful Lucifer became hate-filled Satan. Ultimately it became necessary for him to be expelled from heaven, together with all the angels whom he had deceived by his false charges against God.

It was that awful moment of divine displeasure, and Lucifer's disgrace, that Christ recalled when He said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

Unfortunately this was not the end of the controversy, but merely its transference from heaven to earth. Once on this planet Satan succeeded in corrupting the sinless pair in Eden and subsequently leading their offspring into such hideous depths of sin that it became necessary for God to send the Flood to destroy all save Noah and his family. Thereafter the battle was renewed, culminating in Satan's personal attack upon Christ when He came to earth for man's redemption, portrayed before John in the striking symbolism of Revelation 12:1-5.

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and

upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

"And she brought forth a Man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her Child was caught up unto God, and to His throne."

Glowing in the light of the Christian evangel and standing upon the reflected light of the Mosaic dispensation, the woman clearly represents the true church of God, the twelve stars on her head standing for the twelve apostles. The Man-child, obviously, is Christ.

As for the "great red dragon," this must represent the power which sought to devour the Child when He was born, which was pagan Rome acting on behalf of, and inspired by, "the great dragon, . . . that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan." The horns and crowns of the great red dragon may well represent the sum total of all earthly powers which have manifested the cruel, jealous, hateful spirit of the dragon against Jesus and His followers.

The "Man-child" was "caught up unto God, and to His throne"—a singularly brief but accurate epitome of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

Left alone, "the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her



there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Verse 6.

Here Christ begins to reveal to John the extent of the suffering His church must expect before its final deliverance. It will be forced to flee before its persecutors. Driven from the large centers of population it will seek refuge in out-of-the-way places, finding sustenance in far-off oases and hidden valleys of the mountains. Never, however, will it be forgotten. Christ will see that it is "nourished" (verse 14) and so preserved from extinction.

For twelve hundred sixty-days, or prophetic years, this time of trouble will continue, an amazing prediction of the long period of persecution through which the true church of Christ passed during the Dark Ages.

Incidentally, the time period mentioned here affords a priceless key to the

the words: "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood." Verse 15. This could well refer to the flood of false, vindictive propaganda which was so often directed against the children of God, coupled with the fierce, cruel persecution which it aroused.

"And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." Verse 16.

In these words some relief is promised to the suffering saints. And so it came to pass. With the beginning of the great Reformation came the dawn of religious liberty. Widespread reading of the Bible led multitudes to see how they had been deceived by the sophistries and superstitions of the great apostasy. Enlightened kings and princes espoused the cause

The very word "remnant" suggests that this passage has reference to the final phase of the church's experience. It is apparent also that this remnant is composed of the very people who, as the climax of their spiritual experience, receive the seal of God's approval for their noble, self-sacrificing, commandment-keeping witness for Christ. Undoubtedly it is because of their earnest desire to identify themselves with Christ, and accomplish the work of Christ, that they bring upon themselves the full fury of Satan.

How will he attempt this murderous assault? What earthly power will he inspire with the spirit of the dragon to accomplish this wicked purpose?

Christ answers these questions as He continues to present "the things which shall be hereafter."

*(Continued next week)*



Thousands fell in the fierce crusade against the Albigenses in the early thirteenth century.

meaning of the phrase, "a time and times and the dividing of time" mentioned in Daniel 7:25. It becomes clear that a "time" is one year, or 360 days; two "times" are two years, or 720 days; and "half a time" is half a year, or 180 days, making a total of 1260 symbolic days or literal years. This period lasted from approximately A.D. 538 till 1798, during which time more than fifty million people perished in the cruel massacres of the Albigenses, Waldenses, Huguenots, and others who sought to follow the simple teachings of the Bible in their worship of God.

The intensity of Satan's hatred, and his eagerness for the extirpation of all true followers of Christ, is indicated in

of freedom, and soon there was a wide area of the earth whither persecuted Christians could flee and find sanctuary. During the same period America was discovered and became the haven of multitudes who sought to escape from the religious tyranny which had soaked Europe with blood so many centuries.

Alas, this relief to the church is to be temporary. According to Christ's revelation to John, persecution will be renewed before the end. As the apostle watches the symbolic portrayal of the future, he notes that "the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Verse 17.

## *I Have a Rendezvous*

I have a rendezvous with God!  
Upon His blessed day of rest  
To His beloved house I go, and meet  
With others on the holy quest,  
Whose presence fills His holy place.  
Our spiritual eyes behold  
The radiance of our Father's face.  
Then at the midweek hour of prayer  
What strength flows down our need  
to meet,  
As unto Him in prayer we turn,  
United at the mercy seat!  
How can I to my faith be true  
If I keep not this rendezvous?

—Author Unknown.



# Are Meteors a Sign?

*Should Christians Regard the  
Great Star Shower of 1833 as  
a Harbinger of Christ's Second  
Coming?*

by FRANCIS D. NICHOL

## OBJECTION:

You say that the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833, was a fulfillment of the prophecy that the stars shall fall from heaven as one of the signs of the nearness of Christ's coming. But we need not seek some supernatural, miraculous explanation of this starry event. Astronomers inform us that whirling in space is a great swarm of meteorites, known as the Leonids, which is probably the shattered remains of a comet. These Leonids come within the orbit of our earth about every thirty-three years. There were showers in 1866 and 1899, though very small, because, as the astronomers explain, the planet Jupiter deflected the meteoritic group from the direct path of the earth. Probably this or a similar reason explains the absence of a star shower in 1933.

**ANSWER:** The prime fallacy underlying this objection is the assumption that because a phenomenon has been explained, it has been explained away. Is a stupendous act of God, in the operation of His universe, any the less so because poor finite men have been able to discover something of the plan that the Infinite has employed? A devout astronomer once exclaimed, as he charted the course of the stars, that he was thinking God's thoughts after Him. But did that make those thoughts any the less divine?

We describe as ludicrously egotistical the man who, after examining the product of some inventive wizard, declares that he could have invented such a device, and that there is really nothing to it. But what shall we say of the man who, after discovering a little of the plan that God has used in the performance of some marvelous act, scoffingly declares that there is nothing remarkable about it, that it is merely a "natural phenomenon"! We do not discount an inventor's production because he has called to his aid some simple, natural law, as has been

the case in most inventions. On the contrary, we consider it a mark of the superior mind to be able to see the possibilities of such a simple law and harness it to such wonderful ends. And shall we not as reasonably conclude that a marvelous phenomenon in the heavens, in which "natural" laws have been called into service, proves eloquently the superiority of the mind that produced it?

If God has seen fit to permit His divinely appointed laws of motion to operate so that a comet should be shattered and some of its parts scattered like flaming stars over our earth, what is man that he should impiously contend that some other method should have been employed? or that inasmuch as he can

explain something of the laws that operate in producing the starry sign, he will reject it as being no sign? And if God, once having produced that phenomenon, should allow the wreckage of the comet to remain in our path so that at recurring intervals until the final end, we should be reminded of the great sign that earlier occurred, why should a man perversely declare he will therefore see in it no sign at all?

But let us look at the matter from another angle. When Christ gave that wonderful prophecy marking out the high points along the centuries between His first and second advents, He foreknew just what would take place in the earth and in the heavens. He foresaw,

## BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY

by ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT

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"Behold, I come quickly." Oh, hasten  
Thy coming,  
And fly on the tempest and ride on  
the cloud;  
Around us the rage of the storm is  
increasing,  
The menacing roar of the billows  
is loud.  
The earth holds no refuge, the world  
has no helper,  
And men's hearts are anxious and  
failing with fear;  
Repeat the assurance that fills us with  
comfort  
When death and despair and de-  
struction are near.

"Behold, I come quickly." So come, we  
beseech Thee;  
But what are we doing to hasten  
the day  
When earth shall be filled with the  
light of Thy glory,  
To bring back the King from the  
land far away?  
Are we sowing the seed on the field  
and the wayside,  
Or reaping the harvests long wait-  
ing and white?

Are we keeping our lamps filled and  
shining and burning,  
And holding them high in the  
darkness of night?

"Behold, I come quickly." So come, we  
entreat Thee;  
But how are we helping to answer  
our prayer?  
Do we gather the stumbling blocks  
out of the highway,  
And make smooth the path for the  
feet that walk there?  
Are we doing Thy will? Are we giv-  
ing Thy message  
To souls Thou hast loved and re-  
deemed on the cross?  
Do we show forth Thy grace to the  
sad world around us,  
Thy patience in trial, Thy comfort  
in loss?

We watch for the signs and we love  
Thine appearing,  
We long for the peace that Thy  
kingdom will bring.  
But what are we doing to hasten Thy  
coming?  
And how are we helping to bring  
back the King?

for example, that as the centuries wore along, the world would be filled with war, but that at the same time there would be great plans for peace. Foreknowing that this would be the state just before His return, He declared that when we see such conditions, we may know that the end is near. The contention that this paradoxical war-and-peace condition is the "natural" result of forces that have played upon human natures in recent times does not in any way invalidate the paradox as a sign. Only God could foreknow that these particular forces would be working upon men's hearts two thousand years later. And the taking place of such war-and-peace scenes at the very time when other prophecies declare that "the time of the end" is at hand, provides the proof that He who foretold it was divine and that His promise to return will be fulfilled.

Likewise, Christ foresaw that in the time shortly before His return a great cluster of meteoric fragments would cross the earth's path, thus producing what would be described as a shower of falling stars. Foreknowing this, why should He not declare that when we see this sight we may know the end is near? What could be more easily understood by the masses than such a sight as this?

If a foreknowledge of conditions upon the earth is a proof of Christ's divinity, how much more so a foreknowledge of events in the heavens? The fact is that after counseling His followers to "understand" the book of Daniel, which made specific predictions as to the time of the end, Christ declared calmly that when *that* "time" arrived there would be a great falling of stars. Almost exactly eighteen hundred years before its occurrence the Son of man foretold an event which the wisest of the sons of men could not foretell by a single day.

And He foretold this striking heavenly event in relation to a great group of signs that would take place in the earth and in the heavens, for when we read His prophecy in connection with those He inspired Daniel and John to give, we discover a whole galaxy of signs that were to take place within a very limited and clearly marked period. The spectacular star shower of November 13, 1833, stands securely as a sign, for only the God who orders the courses of the stars could have caused that mighty shower to descend at exactly the right hour to blend with the other parts of a multicolored divinely predicted picture.

—◆—  
 "AND the Lord said, . . . Behold, I have begun to give: . . . begin to possess." Deuteronomy 2:31.

# The Meanest Thief

by DEMIA KNAPP WILSON



**D**ID you ever lose your pocketbook while traveling, far from home and friends? If so, you know what a helpless feeling such a loss gives you.

At one time my sister, whose husband had just died, was traveling with her three little children to take a position as schoolteacher in Minnesota. She was to change trains in Niles, Michigan. The journey was wearisome, and while waiting there in the depot for her train she laid her large purse, with practically all her little earthly wealth, including money, tickets, her husband's watch, his last picture, and other small keepsakes, on the suitcase at her feet.

For a moment she closed her eyes and fell asleep. Upon awakening she missed her purse. The more she looked the more panicky she became! And then she burst out weeping. What would she do, with not a cent to her name and three little children clinging to her skirts? Finally she pressed through the train-time crowd and told the ticket agent what had happened. He telephoned the police. There were no clues, and hope faded. Then the ticket agent kindly announced her predicament to the waiting-room throng. A collection was taken to get her to another place in Michigan where our family lived, and where she had intended to stop en route to Minnesota.

I can hear you say, That was about the meanest thief ever. No, friend, there is another. He is Satan, who is watching for the least sign of carelessness or spiritual drowsiness on our part to steal our most precious possessions. Your ticket to heaven, you know, is a Christlike character, a renovated soul. Your wealth consists of Christian virtues. We are all traveling the highway to the kingdom of God, and if Satan can hinder our progress by stealing these treasures, he will.

One day I was waiting in the large Oakland, California, terminal when a girl about thirteen years of age sat down on the bench opposite me. She was crying violently. At first I thought she had just said good-by to some loved one who was going away. But as she continued to sit there, I decided I ought to offer some assistance. I went over to the child and asked, "What's the matter, dear? Can I help you?"

"I've lost my pocketbook," she wailed. "Oh!" I replied. "Where were you when you missed it?"

"Well, you—you see," she stammered, "I, I was in the rest room washing my hands. I had put my purse on the towel rack. When I came away I just took my suitcase and—and I forgot my purse."

"When did you think of your purse again?"

"I came out here and sat down just a few minutes, then I thought of it. I hurried back there, but of course my purse was gone. I asked the woman who cleans, but she couldn't find it. What am I going to do?"

Such utter despair I had never before seen.

"Where are you going?" I questioned.

"To my grandmother's in Nevada County," she sighed, "and I earned the money all myself, baby sitting. I live near Bakersfield. I bought my ticket this far, and when I got here I bought my ticket the rest of the way; and I had almost ten dollars left."

"How much does it cost to get to your grandmother's from here?" I queried.

"About two dollars and a half."

"All right, don't you worry," I said. "If you don't find your purse we'll find a way to get you to grandmother's." At this she brightened up a little.

"Did you ask at the information desk?" I questioned.

"No," she sobbed.

I told her to stay there with my suitcase and hers while I went to the information desk to see what I could find out. There I was told to go through the side door to the baggage room, where I should find the "Lost and Found" department. I returned to the girl and told her to go to this department while I watched the suitcases. She was gone several minutes, but finally she returned. The minute I saw her I knew she had found her purse, for her face was radiant.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" I exclaimed. "Are your money and ticket all there?"

"Yes," she shouted, "it's all here!"

(Continued on page 15)



# THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS

by RICHARD F. FARLEY

## 20. Prophecies of the Messiah

As soon as sin entered this world, God began the progressive revelation of a plan to save man from its guilt and results. The central idea of this plan was the sending of a Deliverer who should be known as the Messiah. Throughout the Old Testament this hope was built line upon line, "here a little, and there a little," until such a complete picture had been drawn of Him that honest-hearted people recognized in Jesus of Nazareth the chosen of God.

### *What was the first of these Messianic forecasts?*

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15.

This was a message of doom to Satan, the instigator of evil, and a ray of hope for the fallen pair. Salvation was to be made possible through the "seed of the woman." Through Eve, sin had entered the human family. Through one of her children, after many generations, would come salvation. Read 1 Corinthians 15: 21-23 and Romans 5:12-19.

### *Twenty generations later how was the promise restated to Abram?*

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 12:2, 3.

### *According to Jesus' statement, what effect did such promises have on Abraham?*

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad." John 8:56.

Thus it was settled that the Saviour should be a descendant of Abraham. Salvation was to come through the Hebrew race. The promises were later repeated to Isaac and to Jacob.

### *Through what tribe of Israel was the Messiah to appear?*

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Genesis 49:10.

God's providential care would be exercised over the tribe of Judah (from which the word "Jew" is derived) till the Messiah should come. Through the vicissitudes of long centuries, God did that very thing. All other tribes lost their separate identities as specific units. Ten tribes were scattered by their Assyrian conquerors. Benjamin and Levi were more or less absorbed into the kingdom of Judah, which was taken into captivity by Babylon, but later allowed by Persia to return. Not till after Judah had produced the Christ was that tribe shattered by the Romans, in A.D. 70.

### *What sign was to appear in the heavens to announce the arrival of the King?*

"I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." Numbers 24:17.

Almost fifteen hundred years later the Magi arrived in Jerusalem to announce that they had seen and followed the star. It had led them to Jerusalem and then to the home of the baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

### *What kind of prophet was the Messiah to be?*

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and



Through Moses, God promised a Prophet who would speak "all that I shall command Him."

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will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him." Deuteronomy 18:18.

Peter applied this text to Jesus (Acts 3:22), as also did Stephen (Acts 7:37).

In addition to such specific forecasts we find the elaborate service of the sanctuary, which the book of Hebrews interprets as typical of the priesthood and propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus. Hebrews 8:1-5.

Jesus, the high priest, as well as the Lamb of God, is the heart of the whole system. When He is included, all is meaningful. When He is omitted, it becomes an endless round of brutal blood-letting. Little wonder that God gave the message of Isaiah 1:11-13 to the Hebrew nation when they permitted their temple offerings to lose their prophetic meaning. A reverent study of the sacrifices, offerings, and priesthood of Leviticus and Numbers, in their relationship to the incarnation, atonement, and priesthood of Christ, is one of the most richly rewarding of all Bible studies.

There is in some religious circles a tendency to discredit the Old Testament as an authoritative guide for the Christian. It is true that the ceremonial system of sacrificial services, together with the elaborate sanctuary ritual and annual feast days connected with it, came to an end at the cross of Christ. But if we hold to Jesus as the Saviour and Messiah we must of necessity hold to the Old Testament Scriptures as the foundation of that belief.

The central theme of both the Old and New Testaments is the salvation offered through Jesus. The Old Testament is a long-range anticipation, in forecast and type, looking afar off as through a telescope. Hebrews 11:13. The Gospels examine the life of Jesus under a microscope. They testify to the fact that He fits perfectly the prophetic pattern. The Epistles apply the gospel principles to the practical problems of world evangelism and church organization. The book of Revelation glimpses the future, from the time of the apostles to the new heaven and the new earth.

*In believing that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, how heavily do we therefore rest, like Peter, on the fulfillment of the prophetic picture?*

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And

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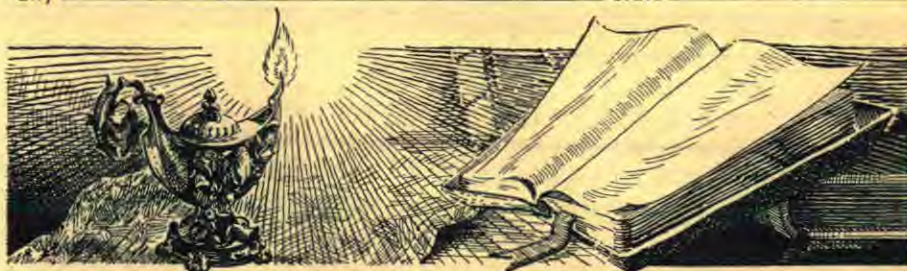
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this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:16-19.

*With what exactness was the birthplace of the Christ child pointed out at least seven hundred years in advance?*

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2.

This prophecy was mentioned by the Jewish theologians at the time of the visit of the Wise Men to Jerusalem. Matthew 2:6.

*In what strange way was the birth of the Christ child to differ from that of all other human beings?*

"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14.

The efficiency of the atoning death of Christ is dependent on the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

*What forecast was given through Daniel to point out the exact date when the Anointed One should begin His public ministry?*

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem [457 B.C.] unto the Messiah the Prince

shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." Daniel 9:25. This would make the appearance of the Messiah come four hundred eighty-three years after 457 B.C. Exactly on time Jesus came to be baptized by John the Baptist, at which time He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and began His public ministry. He said a little later, "The time is fulfilled." Mark 1:15. And Paul declares that He came in "the fullness of the time." Galatians 4:4.

The New Testament writers and teachers identified Jesus as the Messiah because He fulfilled the forecasts of the Old Testament prophets. See John 5:39, 46 and Luke 4:21; 24:25-27, 32.

*Whom did the disciples declare they had found when they came in contact with Jesus?*

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. . . Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John 1:41-45.

The most serious question we can ask ourselves is, "Have I, too, found Him to be my Saviour, the Anointed of the Lord, the Christ?"

## Cannibalism

(Continued from page 7)

out the men wanted as suspects for murder. This native policeman is highly respected all over that country as the result of that experience.

"The story of the gospel is sweet to

# "Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?"



This question was asked the Ethiopian treasurer by the apostle Philip nearly two thousand years ago. Millions of earth's inhabitants today either do not read the word of God or do not fully comprehend all that they read. *Signs of the Times*, The World's Prophetic Weekly, interprets the Scriptures and explains many of the difficult passages of the

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my taste," exclaimed this central New Guinea policeman to a group of people who had gathered to hear him relate some of his experiences among the cannibals. Yes, the gospel, which is the bread of life in present-day action, is "sweet to the taste," as many can testify. It liberates men and women from the vicious tentacles of sin, shame, and degradation, irrespective of race or nationality. It is likewise for rich and poor, high and low. Even cannibalism bows and dies before its conquering power.

## Understand the Bible

(Continued from page 6)

dent. Almost anything can be proved if this rule is disregarded. "There is not a form of evil doctrine or practice that may not claim apparent sanction and support from isolated passages; but nothing erroneous or vicious can even find countenance from the word of God when the whole united testimony of Scripture is weighed against it. Partial examination will result in partial views of truth which are necessarily imperfect."<sup>8</sup>

For example, Job 34:35 says, "Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom." Does the Bible itself, then, condemn the book of Job as worthless? No: a study of the book and of the context of the verse reveals that these words were merely an accusation of Job by Elihu. And, later, Job's accusers were strongly reprimanded by God Himself, while Job was justified.

In Romans 3:8 we find the startling phrase, "Let us do evil, that good may come." What! Does the Bible teach the diabolical doctrine that a good end justifies bad means? Is Paul another Machiavelli? Now read the entire verse: "And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just."

5. "Do you understand what you are reading?" "Why, how can I," he answered, "unless someone explains it to me?" Acts 8:30, 31, Goodspeed. God Himself uses human beings as instruments of the Holy Spirit to teach the meaning of Scripture. Devout men have written helps to Bible study, such as concordances, Bible dictionaries, and commentaries. These often clear up difficult passages when the Bible itself does not do so. It is only natural that scholars familiar with the original languages in which the Bible was written, besides archaeology, secular ancient history, geography of the Holy Land, and many other related subjects, would be able to illumine obscure verses.

Once as I was reading Exodus 26:15,

16 the thought sprang to my mind, "Where did Moses get all those large boards of shittim wood about two and a quarter by fifteen feet) to build the sanctuary out there in the wilderness of Sinai? He could not have known before he left Egypt that he was to build the sanctuary, as this was revealed to him later on Mount Sinai." My idea of the Sinai wilderness was an area of sand dunes dotted here and there with cacti and a bit of sagebrush. I could have at once cast away my faith in God and the Bible over this apparent "error," as some have done. Instead, I decided to see what I could find out from someone who knew more about shittim wood than I did. This is what I found under "Shittim wood" in my Bible dictionary:

"Even now common in Palestine, though it has been constantly used for lumber, and for making charcoal. Trees are found with trunks two feet in diameter. In olden times they very probably were sometimes three or four feet in diameter. The wood is close-grained and hard, of a fine yellow-brown color, and admirably adapted to cabinet work. The *Acacia seyal* [the technical name for the shittah tree, which yields shittim wood] is very common in some parts of the peninsula of Sinai."<sup>9</sup> (Italics supplied.)

In this way, a moment's research made clear what could have been very perplexing to me. Not a few have become Bible condemners over such easily solved "problems." Authorities are consulted in every other field of knowledge. Why overlook the Bible expert on such technical matters?

From all this it may seem that the Bible is only for the learned and the scholarly. By no means! The German princes truly stated in their protest: "This Holy Book is, in all things necessary for the Christian, easy of understanding, and calculated to scatter the darkness."<sup>10</sup>

The great fundamental truths of salvation can be grasped by a little child or a primitive savage. Teaching little children the Scriptures was approved practice in apostolic times. "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." 2 Timothy 3:15. But it is when the Bible student progresses from the simpler, more essential truths to the deeper, more technical points of Bible history and theology that he needs to be increasingly careful rightly to interpret what he reads by following the Bible's own rules of interpretation. Even then the Bible will always contain some things which are beyond man's complete understanding.

This is so because God's mind is greater than man's. It is here that faith must be used.

Few men have exemplified true Bible study better than Charles H. Spurgeon. Said he: "It is blessed to eat into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in Scriptural language, and your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord, so that your blood is *Bibline* and the very essence of the Bible flows from you. Hundreds of times I have surely felt that presence of God in the page of Scripture."<sup>11</sup> During his life at least 3,500 of his different Bible-filled sermons were published in seventy-five volumes! To read one a day would take ten years!<sup>12</sup> Yet he says:

"There are hundreds of texts in the Bible which remain like virgin summits, whereon the foot of the preacher has never stood. I might almost say that the major part of the word of God is in that condition: it is still an El Dorado unexplored, a land whose dust is gold. After thirty-five years I find that the quarry of Holy Scripture is inexhaustible; I seem hardly to have begun to labor in it!"<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Varner J. Johns, "Your Wonderful Bible," published by The Voice of Prophecy. Last chapter, pages 86-96, is a collection of quotations about the Bible.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from an issue of "The Ministry." The actual figure given is fifty-seven Bibles sold per minute.

<sup>3</sup> H. L. Hastings. Quoted in "Your Wonderful Bible," loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> E. G. White, "Education," page 189.

<sup>5</sup> H. M. S. Richards, "Bible Question Box," The Voice of Prophecy, 1949, page 74.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by E. G. White, in "The Great Controversy," page 203.

<sup>7</sup> F. D. Nichol, "The Midnight Cry," page 31.

<sup>8</sup> Statement made by Arthur T. Pierson, quoted in "Your Wonderful Bible," loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup> F. N. Peloubet, "The International Bible Dictionary," Winston, pages 624, 625.

<sup>10</sup> "The Great Controversy," loc. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Richard E. Day, "Shadow of the Broad Brim," Judson Press, 1934, page 131.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 129, 130.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

## The Meanest Thief

(Continued from page 11)

There will be joy at the end of life's journey if we can retain our ticket to heaven. If in a thoughtless moment you should mar your character, remember that God is always in the "Lost and Found" department. If we go to Him in penitence and faith, He will help us to recover what we have lost.

The Good Book says, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Revelation 3:11.

IN the parable the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep,—the very least that can be numbered. So if there had been but one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one.—E. G. White.

## "Spiritual Bill of Rights"

(Continued from page 4)

In ancient times the family was the religious unit. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob built their altars and worshiped with their families. The importance of religion in the education of children is further taught in God's command to the children of Israel shortly before they were to enter the Promised Land: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deuteronomy 6:6, 7. Spiritual and temporal blessings were promised for faithfulness. The history of Israel through the centuries that followed was a series of successes and failures, according as the nation obeyed or disobeyed God's command.

An example of home teaching is the Christian minister Timothy, to whom the inspired apostle Paul wrote, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:14, 15. His teachers were his grandmother and his mother. 2 Timothy 1:5.

We firmly believe that if the recommendations of the American Legion were generally followed there would be fewer broken homes, fewer neglected children, and less delinquency, both juvenile and adult. Someone has said, "Families that pray together stay together." Parents who pray with and for their children will not neglect them for the cocktail lounge and the night club. Religious instruction in the home, with the Bible as the principal textbook, is the right of every child.

Let us resolve, if we have been remiss in our religious duties, to re-establish the family altar and renew our church attendance. Even though the children have been taken captive by the enemy, it is not too late to put forth our best efforts to save them. God asks, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?" Then He promises, "But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." Isaiah 49:24, 25.

It is our privilege to co-operate with Him.

C. D. U.

# PRESENT BENEFITS

by SANFORD T. WHITMAN

**T**O THE old rancher who had come down from the hills to attend the annual camp meeting of his church, the man in the wheel chair was a source of pity and wonder. He was so completely helpless. His condition was so obviously beyond human help. Yet, with every reason to despair, he was radiantly, contagiously happy. Meeting him was like meeting an old friend. Talking with him was like raising the shades and letting in the morning sunlight. He was the soul of geniality and bouyancy.

The two men met the first evening of the encampment, and in the days which followed they visited together frequently. They talked of many things, for despite his new friend's affliction the elderly farmer found him to be a man of keen observation and deep understanding. One afternoon the man in the wheel chair asked the man from the hills how long he had been a church member.

"All my life," replied the rancher.

The man in the wheel chair shook his head slowly. There was awe and admiration and something akin to envy in his expression.

"I've been a member less than a year."

"Then this is your first camp meeting?"

"Yes."

The farmer studied the face beaming up at him from the pillow. "You seem to be enjoying it."

"It's the most wonderful experience of my life. I didn't know that anything could be so good. Think of all the wonderful things I've been missing."

Of all that he saw and heard during his ten days on the campground, the rancher from the hills took this latter statement most to heart. In the weeks and months which followed, these three sentences came back to him again and again. All the blessings of the gospel are not for tomorrow. Christians today are not a group of frustrated have-nots, looking to the future for the pleasures which have eluded them in this life. The power, wisdom, love, and mercy of God are con-

stant and eternal values, ever freighted with the richest human blessing.

How dimly do we perceive the greatness and the *nowness* of the goodness of God and His "exceeding great and precious promises"! 2 Peter 1:4.

Let us notice a few of the hundreds which could be cited.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Isaiah 41:10.

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1.

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions: . . . I have redeemed thee." Isaiah 44:22.

"Let not your heart be troubled. . . . In My Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:1, 2.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee. . . . Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Isaiah 26:3, 4.

"Who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Psalm 103:3-5.

"The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself." Psalm 4:3.

"There is no want to them that fear Him." Psalm 34:9.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Ephesians 3:20.

Fellow pilgrim, are you enjoying the *present benefits* of Christian fellowship? Are you drinking from the fountain of living waters? Are you feasting on the heavenly manna? If you are not, don't you think it is time to do so? Why not break with the past at once, and enjoy for yourself the finest and most wonderful things in life?



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