

THE BIBLE AND

OUR TIMES

Discerning The Times

FEARLESS IN AN AGE OF FEAR

In a sermon translated from the German in a recent issue of the *Guardian*, Dr. Martin Niemoller provides us with one of the most penetrating diagnoses of the grievous sickness of our modern world.

Brushing aside the false and deceptive assurances of those who every now and then suggest that "all that is needed is one great final exertion," he faces the fact that the world's situation is desperate and puts his finger upon the deep-seated root of our troubles when he says:

"Fear has become the real and ultimate Great Power of our time. Its reign is universal and knows no frontiers. . . . Men and nations are forced to serve it whether they want to or not. . . . The appeal to fear, of which Bismarck once maintained that it 'would never find an echo in German hearts,' echoes to-day through the whole world of men and nations. Fear rules the world; fear drives us to one another and against one another, fear of death and fear of life. . . .

"In this fear of life and fear of death lie the roots of all the inhumanity, enmity, and hatred of our time: it is this fear that drives men and nations to each others' throats; and we all know something of the way this fear of our age is traded on, so that it becomes immeasurable, resulting finally in the murder and suicide of men and nations."

No one can read such words as these without being reminded of the prophetic forecast of Jesus, uttered nearly two millenniums ago, yet largely overlooked and forgotten amid the paeans of praise for the achievements of modern man.



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"Ye shall hear of wars and commotions. . . . Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," Jesus began His remarkable outline of the course of history from His own time on into the distant future.

Many more calamities such as "earthquakes . . . and famines, and pestilences," He foretold, and then, reaching the climax of the prophetic panorama, He declared:

"There shall be . . . upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:9, 10, 25, 26.

That there have been natural calamities in plenty as well as war and strife of human generation none have sought to deny. But that the world could ever come to such a pass as Jesus predicted was regarded as fantastic by the glorifiers of modern civilization but a few decades ago. Mankind, they were confident, was moving steadily forward under an inevitable evolutionary impulse, and before

long everything that could evoke fear would be eliminated.

In a world of increasing prosperity and plenty all fear of want would disappear.

The fear of pain and disease and death would be banished as man's physical ills were progressively conquered.

There would be no fear for security, for peace and amity would reign among the nations to the earth's far ends.

But, sad to say, the erstwhile rosy optimists have had to confess that it has not worked out at all like that. In a few decades all their hopes have been shattered because they blinded their eyes to the sinister fact of developing sin in the human heart. On the other hand, Jesus, who "knew what was in man" (John 2:25), has proved absolutely and tragically right.

Faced with the complete shattering of all man's illusions as to his capabilities and destiny and in the throes of the universal fear, the great majority of mankind have been plunged into utter and abject despair.

That, however, need not be. For the same divine Diagnostician who so accurately foretold the modern disillusion has also provided the strongest of grounds for those who are willing to put their trust in His healing power to "Fear not."

The world might, and indeed would, come to the place where to human vision and reasoning there would be "no way out," but, said Jesus, there will at that time be revealed a divine way out. For at the moment of final catastrophe "shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21:27.

Of course, those who scorned the warnings of world catastrophe scoffed equally at the idea of any such divine intervention in human affairs. "Where is the promise of His coming?" they said just as the pen of Inspiration declared they would. (2 Peter 3:4.) But to-day many who have seen the collapse of human ambitions and hopes are

turning with a new humility and trust to the divine solution in this crisis of history.

To such, while the prophetic Word uncompromisingly exposes the fearful outcome of human sin it also provides "a light . . . in a dark place, until the day dawn." 2 Peter 1:19.

The outlook may indeed be black but the uplook is bright as the promises of God. Man may, and indeed has failed, but God will not. In His good time He will surely bring out of the ultimate human catastrophe a "new heaven and a new earth" wherein those of His choosing shall safely and eternally dwell.

The important thing to you and me is whether we shall be admitted to or excluded from that privileged citizenship, and that will be determined by whether or not we are found "on the Lord's side" in the day of the "great change." Now, therefore, is the time to decide!



"Lovers of Pleasures"

"EIGHTY-FIVE million Americans visit the cinema each week," writes G. C. Norman in the *Tablet*. "In Australia three times as many people are admitted to cinemas as to all other forms of entertainment and sport combined. In England some twenty-five million people pay an average of 1s. 6d. weekly into the box-office—almost the entire working population of the country, and over half of their children. In fifty years the cinema industry has become the third largest in the world, and is carrying its own peculiar brand of culture to over one hundred thousand cinemas in every important place in the world."



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A unique underwater jeep on trial off the coast of Florida.

MAY 3, 1951

GOD ALWAYS COMES BACK

By R. A. Vince

It has been suggested that there are only two great things in the universe—the heart of God and the heart of man—and that the two are ever seeking one another. The truth of the matter, however, appears in the story of the Garden of Eden, where we see God calling to Adam, saying, "Where art thou?" and Adam hiding, naked and afraid, from the presence of his Creator. Here is a picture of God seeking after us, and most of us, conscience-stricken and guilty, trying to evade Him.

Since the entry of sin contaminated human character, God is not reckoned by many to be a comfortable companion. His reality and our accountability to Him are so often considered disturbing to the liberties of life. Consequently, Paul declares in Romans 3:11 that "there is none that seeketh after God," while "the goodness of God" is ever seeking to lead man "to repentance." Rom. 2:4, God is the prime mover in the salvation of any one of us. He is "the Author of our faith." What could be more appealing, more gracious than His invitation, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. . . . If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel—" Isa. 1:18-20. Aye, there's the rub: "If ye refuse and rebel."

He Meets Us Again and Again

Despite the various ways men employ to evade the fact of God, as the wise Gamaliel said in Acts 5:39: "Ye cannot overthrow it." However we may try to get rid of God—to use a harsh phrase—so loving is He, that He always comes back to seek us again. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it



"I stand at the door, and knock."

cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8.

If the warm breath of God's entreaty does not turn us to Him, blowing as it were, from the south, then it will come again and again from other directions. God is not easily put off from saving you or me. He always comes back again. Many, like Jonah, take a ticket to Tarshish, fleeing from His call, only to find God waiting a little further along the road. Some violently rebel against their conscience like Saul, and learn, even on the Damascus road, that it is hard to kick against the pricks. Yes, God will always come back, even if at last it be in the judgment to confront us either with the reward of our acceptance or our stubbornness.

Ever since the Tower of Babel was built in open defiance of God, foolish men have tried

to band together against Him. By open violence, the satanic, seven-headed dragon described in Revelation chapter twelve, has tried through seven great empires from Egypt to Rome, to destroy the people of God through whom Christ was to come, and through whom the knowledge of God was to be preserved. But God has never left Himself without witness. The rack, the wheel, fire or sword have had to admit failure. Think of tyrants like Nero, who lighted the arena of Rome with burning Christians. Think of despots of later date who cry "Religion is an opiate" and thus defy the God of heaven. But always "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." God always comes back. Be sure that in these violent days there are thousands whose strained and sickened hearts are turning silently to find their peace in Him.

Scorned—But He Still Returns

Perhaps because belief in God has always entailed submission to Him, many have sought to reason God away. "The world by wisdom knew not God," I read in 1 Corinthians 1:21. Because God cannot be trapped in a test tube many refuse to accept Him in the universe or in their lives. Much of our modern literature is saturated with the idea that the progress of mankind, especially in scientific development, has disclosed serious defects in the foundations of Christianity. On the other hand, some, like H. Kraemer, recognize that "the tempest of contemporary history is forcing back the Christian church to fundamentals, to such a radically religious conception of life as is revealed to us in the Bible." "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," says God, "and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." 1 Cor. 1:19.

What would you say has been one of the prevailing characteristics of the twentieth century? Has it not been indifference, a sort of hardening of the spiritual arteries against the multiplying signs of the times which speak so clearly to us of fulfilling Bible prophecy; against the accumulating evidences for the accuracy of the Bible record; against any form of faith in God which would disturb the selfish pattern of men's lives?

Nevertheless, it is to this indifferent generation that God will come back, in all the reality of a visible, personal return of our Lord, to claim those who love Him and follow Him

with sincere and humble hearts. Psalm forty-six describes that day: "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, He uttered His voice, the earth melted. . . . He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. . . . Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Will you enter into this Refuge and be safe? Declare your allegiance to Him, and through Jesus our Saviour, anchor your heart to the heart of the Infinite God.



Science and the Flood

(Continued from page 7.)

tic catastrophe that shook the entire framework of the globe." The flood was the most gigantic phenomenon that ever occurred on the earth, or that ever will, until the second advent of Christ. (See 2 Peter 3:5-7.)

The flood has written its story in the rocks of the earth and in the minds of the human race. God wrote it by inspiration in the pages of the Bible. For one hundred and twenty years the Spirit of God wooed and warned the sons and daughters of men. For one hundred and twenty years Noah preached by word and by deed, but his message of a world about to perish was rejected. Finally the door of mercy was closed. The hour of their probation passed. The sands of time ran out. "And [they] knew not until the flood came, and took them all away." Matt. 24:39. They might have known. They were not interested, however, in God's word, but only in their business and social affairs. So the flood came and it turned the world upside-down. That lesson needs to be heeded to-day. For Jesus said: "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives . . . until the day that Noe entered the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." Luke 17:26, 27.

The Only Refuge

Remember the ark was a safe refuge; it was the only refuge. The invitation was given for nearly a century and a quarter. But alas! Too late. The door was shut. To-day, we can find salvation in Christ and in Him alone. He is a safe refuge. He is the only refuge.



The ark comes to rest upon dry ground after the great Deluge.

Science and the Flood

By T. L. Gillett

NOAH'S flood and Noah's ark have been the subject of many jests. The humorists have joined some scientists in an effort to consign the record of Genesis six to eight to the realm of myth and fable.

Jesus, however, believed there was a flood and likened the closing days of this earth's history and His second coming to the days of Noah: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:37-39.

Actually, scientific investigation has provided us with a flood of evidence outside of the Bible record, that the flood did occur. Sea shells have been found on the tops of high mountains, fossils of forms common to salt water and to dry land are found indiscrimi-

nately buried together, all over the world. High shore lines are found above the present water level on most sea coasts. Coral, which grows only in warm water, is found in Arctic seas. Millions of fish, destroyed in the act of swimming, are found in vast deposits of sea mud, now solid rock. And there are also traditions of the flood among all the great races of mankind.

When one considers the size of the ark, about five hundred and fifty feet long, ninety feet wide, and fifty-five feet high, this being approximately the dimensions of a modern liner, it should not be difficult to imagine how the clean beasts by their sevens and the unclean beasts by their twos, could be stowed away in their various compartments and maintained comfortably for many weeks.

Not So Fantastic After All

As for the quantity of water to make a flood possible it must be remembered that 70 per cent of the surface of our globe is covered with water while only 30 per cent is dry land. The

average depth of the ocean is 15,000 feet, while the average height of the land is only 2,500 feet. The ocean is therefore five and a half times deeper than the land is high. There is over fifteen times more water below sea level than there is dry land above it. Careful calculations reveal that if the surface of the earth were levelled out, it would be completely covered with water more than one and a half miles deep.

One scientist discussing the phenomenon of the polar ice caps conceives the possibility of a literal future flood. Should they melt, "Salt water will sweep the continents, leaving only the higher land dry. Holland will be inundated. . . . Most of England will lie beneath the waves. The desert of the Sahara will become a great inland sea." This is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture, which says: "Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." Gen. 9:11. It does, however, show that the idea of a flood is not scientifically fantastic after all!

It is really easy to see how the rushing waters of Noah's deluge, with two flood tides and two ebb tides each twenty-four hours, could remodel the whole of the earth's surface. Stratified rocks indeed show this. Often we see a layer of sandstone, then a vein of coal, then a layer of shale and a layer of sandstone, with the whole arrangement repeated fifty or seventy-five times in one locality, and which suggests the ebb and flow of the water which deposited them. The Bible says: "And the waters returned from off the earth continually." Gen. 8:5. The marginal reference reads: "In going and returning."

The Earth Speaks

Wonderful discoveries are being made to-day as men turn the stone pages of God's book of nature. And how true to the Bible record they are! "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee," Job was told (chap. 12:8). The earth itself speaks for God. It says the climate was once the same all over the globe. But

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Reconstruction of one of the fossil mammoths entombed in the Siberian snows.

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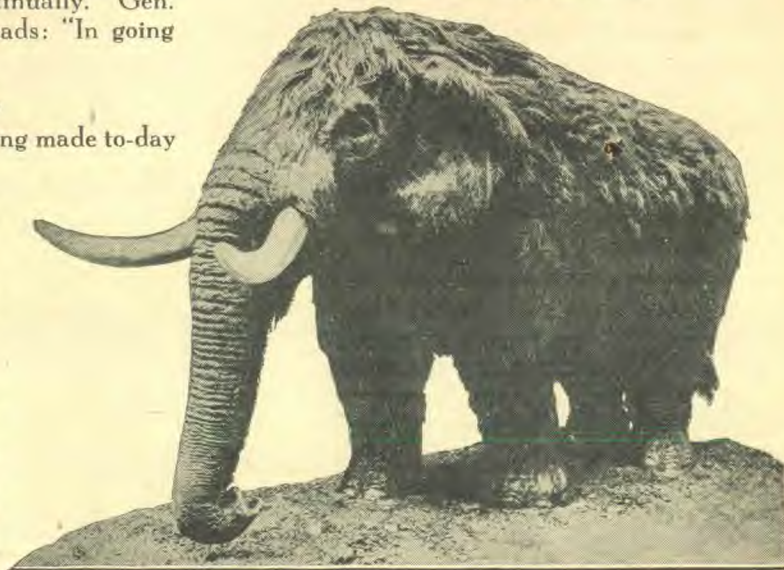
a sudden change came. Labrador had a climate corresponding to that of Southern Italy. One Arctic explorer found a vein of coal thirty feet thick within four hundred miles of the North Pole. Specimens examined through a microscope revealed remains of the giant Sequoia tree, found chiefly in California to-day, and which requires a warm, moist atmosphere.

The beasts of loag ages ago speak for God. In silent testimony they tell us of a universal catastrophe wiping out millions of animals in a few hours, and changing the climate of the world. Great elephants, mammoths, mastodons, huge camels, and other gigantic creatures lived in those days, all on the same tropical vegetation. Now they are gone. Where? The Bible story of the flood supplies the answer. Hundreds of giant hairy elephants have been found in the frozen mud and gravels of Siberia. Unchewed grass in their mouths showed that they perished suddenly. Some huge catastrophe buried them under millions of tons of gravel; then the sudden cold of the new climate froze them.

"The fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee." Billions of fishes have been found fossilized in coal beds, oil sands, and great rock layers. Whole schools of fish were suddenly buried alive by sediment, with every scale in place, every fin extended as in life.

Even Darwin declared, in the middle of the last century, that "the evidence hurries the mind to the conclusion that it was some gigan-

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PAGE SEVEN

By W. L. F.



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General Eisenhower interviews Signor De Gasperi during his recent tour of Europe.

EVER since Cain raised his hand against his brother Abel there has been strife among men. Personal enmities developed into family feuds and tribal hatreds, and with the growth of nations and kingdoms, wars have widened in their impact until, in the first half of the twentieth century, we have seen two world wars and are living in constant fear of the outbreak of a third and even more devastating conflict.

This progressive development of human conflict gives the lie to the evolutionary speculators who prophesied the gradual elimination of strife and the dawn of a warless world.

On the other hand, it is a precise fulfilment of the unerring prophetic picture in the Word of God of the course of human history.

"Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars," Jesus Himself declared to His disciples. "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," until at last there would be universal "distress of nations with perplexity [literally 'with no way out'];" and "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things

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which are coming on the earth." Matt. 24:6, 7; Luke 21:25, 26.

At such a time, Jesus declared, when mankind had reached the very brink of universal calamity, God would intervene through the instrumentality of His Son, who would be manifest to a startled world "coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21:27.

Now if no further guidance had been given to the people of God than that war and turmoil

would intensify until the moment of divine intervention, while the church would thereby be able to recognize the outworking of the divine Word, they would have no precise indication of the imminence of the "catastrophe of redemption."

So, in addition to the panoramic outline of history, God gave, through His prophets, most precise and full information concerning a period designated "the time of the end" when the lengthening shadows would leap suddenly forward with increasing momentum like those cast by the declining sun as it drops swiftly below the horizon.

With this additional guidance then we may look at the history of the development of war down the centuries to see if we can discover any point in its long and tragic story when the momentum of conflict began startlingly to increase, presaging the entry of the world into this last climactic period of history.

History of Human Conflict

In the earliest days of tribal conflicts there were no armies as such, nor were there any special weapons of war. When the alarm was sounded, the able-bodied men of the tribe

OUR TIMES

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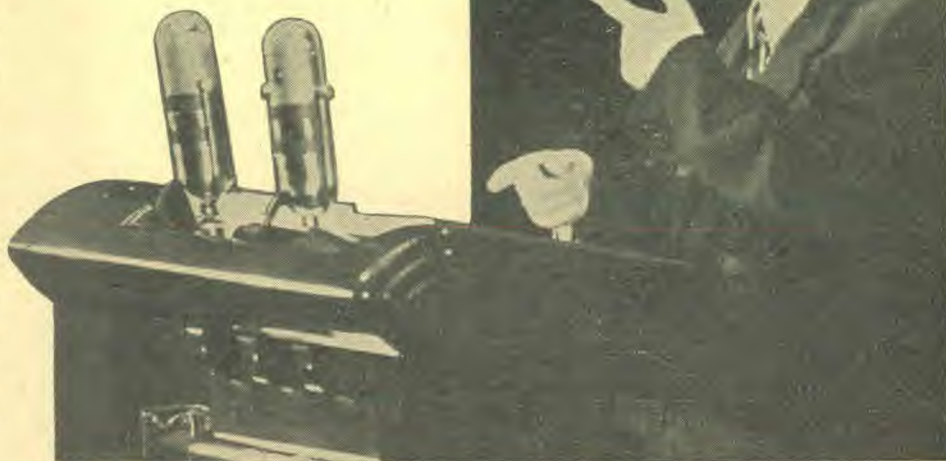
seized their weapons of the chase—spear, club, and bow—and set forth under the leadership of the chief to battle for their homes and possessions.

With the birth of nations, and, in due course, of great powers like Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, armies and the special equipage of war came into existence for the maintenance and extension of the authority of pharaoh or king.

Except, however, for the aristocratic élite which led the armies, the personnel were still mobilized from the agricultural and artisan classes of the nation only on the call of the ruler, and after the expedition was over they returned to their peaceful avocations on the land or in the city. Their weapons of war were still simple and their numbers comparatively small. Usually the campaigning of the ruler or king but little affected the great majority of the population, unless their homes and lands lay in the path of the opposing forces.

With the rise of the Greek and Roman Empires, the first regular armies came into existence. The Macedonian phalanx and the Roman legion reveal the beginnings of definite military organization. Yet, even so, in the great days of Cæsar Augustus, the golden Emperor of Rome maintained an army of no more than twenty-five legions, or a total of 300,000 men, to uphold the authority of Rome over Western Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.

With the break-up of the Roman Empire, the only military forces for centuries were the tribal levies of the barbarian kingdoms and it was not until the tenth century that Charlemagne laid the foundations of the feudal armies of the Middle Ages. From this new beginning



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Mr. Vishinsky haranguing the delegates at a United Nations Session.

of military organization arose the national armies of France and Spain, of Switzerland, Holland, Sweden, England, and the rest, yet even in the days of France's greatness under Louis XIV the standing army at his disposal, which was the largest in Europe, comprised no more than 200,000 troops.

It thus appears that right down to the end of the eighteenth century the wars in Europe and elsewhere were waged by comparatively small forces, with simple equipment, and while they effected great dynastic changes, they seldom resulted in any serious disturbance in the lives of the great majority of the peoples.

Inception of "The Nation in Arms"

It is profoundly significant, therefore, that with the close of the "great tribulation" of the mediæval period and the beginning of the "time of the end," which prophecy declared would immediately follow, something startling did happen in the history of war. For it was in the days of the French Revolution that the principle of conscription or universal military service was born.

In 1793, Auguste Carnot secured the enactment in the revolutionary Convention of the first compulsory service act, or "*levée en masse*," to supersede the old royal army.

As a result of this new and unique method of recruitment no fewer than 770,000 Frenchmen were under arms by January 1, 1794. On this foundation, Napoleon's "Grande Armée" was built, and between 1800 and 1813 a total of 2,613,000 men had been called to serve under the tricolour of France. In the last of these years the unprecedented number of 1,140,000 men were drafted into service.

Out of the revolutionary principle of equality, therefore, there was born, just as the "time of the end" began, the doctrine of the "nation in arms."

In self-defence, the other continental nations of Europe were compelled to follow the policy of Napoleon. So the armies of Europe began rapidly to grow and the shadows of total war began to lengthen across the face of the continent and the world. By reason of the tremendous advances in science and technology during the nineteenth century, which put new and more terrible weapons in the hands of the expanding armies, the shadows also darkened as they lengthened.

In 1874 Germany had a peace-time army of 400,000 men. By 1913 this had risen to 870,000. Besides this, however, Germany had, as a result of universal short-term service, 4,430,000 men who had been trained for war, making a total war strength of 5,300,000. France, endeavouring desperately to keep up with developments in Germany, had a total of 4,000,000 ready or in reserve. Austria had 2,000,000, and Italy 1,200,000.

Only Britain and the United States were satisfied with smaller potential armies, voluntarily enlisted, because of their comparative isolation and their powerful naval defences.

It was these vast forces cast into the melting pot of armed conflict in 1914, together with new weapons like the high explosive shell, the military plane, the tank, and poison gas, which produced the unprecedented holocaust of World War I. In that conflict "some fifty millions of men were conscripted, and the total casualties in killed alone has been reckoned at more than ten millions."—"*Encyclopedia Britannica*," Vol. 6, page 284, Art. "Conscription."

After World War I the alarmed statesmen of the world, realizing that unless the rising spiral were checked, humanity would ultimately destroy itself, began to talk about and work for "disarmament." But the history of the two and a half decades between World War I and World War II reveals how impotent man was to restrain the Frankenstein monster he had created.

In 1936, that is three years before the second World War, Germany had a potential war strength of 3,650,000; France 6,911,808; Italy 6,318,625; Rumania 1,900,827; Poland 2,046,244; Yugoslavia 1,342,000; Czechoslovakia 1,626,100; Greece 494,600; Belgium 571,000; the Netherlands 359,500; Norway 330,100; Russia 15,725,000, and Japan 2,310,000. These, with still more devilish weapons of war which had been produced in the inter-war period, produced in World War II the most colossal devastation in the history of the world and left the continent of Europe almost a shambles.

And now only six years after the close of World War II, the nations, unable to arrest the fearful momentum of destruction, are preparing for the unknown horrors of World War III.

West Girds to Meet Soviet Colossus

In his recent speeches before the Assembly of the Council of Europe and in the House of Commons, Mr. Winston Churchill has set before the world the grim and terrible facts of the menace of Soviet might.

Russia, he told the British parliament, has, on reliable estimates, no fewer than "175 active divisions" and these "could in a few months be raised to 300 divisions." Russian mechanized forces are believed to include something like 25,000 tanks. In the air, the Soviet Union is known to have a first-line strength of more than 15,000 planes, and whereas at the beginning of World War II, Germany had but thirty ocean-going submarines, the Russians have a fleet of 360.

To meet this colossal threat, the nations of the West are feverishly seeking to build and equip military forces on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as in the Middle and the Far East.

In a matter of months, U.S. defence spending has been shot up from an annual rate of seventeen or eighteen billion dollars before the Kor-

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By T. K. Martin

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Before the bar of God all will receive the reward of righteousness or the sentence of eternal doom.

JUDGMENT BOUND!

By R. D. Vine

THOUGH the mists of uncertainty obscure the immediate future, there is one thing about which we need have no doubt. The end toward which we are hastening is a sublime though awful certainty. The precise nature of the road ahead may seem to be shrouded in mystery, but the journey's end is as certain as the day. For some the "end" implies all that is good; for others, all that is tragic and bad. For it is the day of final judgment when God, at long last, calls a halt to the maniacal follies of sin, and eliminates once and for all from His universe the last vestige of evil.

The final judgment is inescapable. Man may ignore it, despise it, disbelieve it. He may regard it as impossible, inconceivable, fantastic.

He may cleverly marshal the so-called evidences of science to prove conclusively that such a day is a mere figment. But it is coming nevertheless. The omnipotent God, in whose sight humanity's billions are but as the dust of the balance, is sublimely unaffected by the declarations or opinions of puny man. His purposes will be carried through. He has mercifully revealed His benevolent plan to judge between good and bad, and to reward accordingly. To realize this must surely come as a relief to the anxious, and a source of hope to the hopeless.

Says the apostle Paul: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." 2 Cor. 5:10. And again: God "hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in right-

eousness by that Man [Jesus] whom He hath ordained." Acts 17:31.

All humanity will be affected: old and young, good and bad, living and dead, Christian and pagan, you and I. None will be excluded. All of us are judgment bound.

Thus with solemn significance comes the wise man's warning—directed especially to youth but appropriate for all: "Let thy heart cheer thee, . . . and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Eccles. 11:9. Here is an inspired reminder that we may do precisely as we please while living here. We may live the abstemious life of an ascetic or the profligate life of a libertine, we may support the church or ridicule it, we may live wholesomely or loosely, we may be workers or shirkers—God will compel us neither way. But He declares that "for all these things" He will ultimately bring us "into judgment."

Too Late!

What of the guilty in the judgment day? Those who reach that day laden with unconfessed sins will find themselves before a God who "will by no means clear the guilty." Exod. 34:7. Too late then to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Saviour. Too late then to seek mercy and pardon. In that day the sentence on all the impenitent will be eternal exclusion from the blessings of that new life with which God plans to reward His followers. "The wages of sin," says Paul, "is death." Rom. 6:23. Those who, by accepting Christ, have attained innocence, will be accounted worthy of eternal life. But those who reject Him as the Bearer of their guilty load of sin, will be condemned to eternal death.

What of the standard by which man's guilt will be determined? The benevolent Judge leaves no room for reasonable doubt. He says: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:12. And in the previous verse this law is clearly shown to be the one which commands: "Do not commit adultery," and "Do not kill." Thus the standard whereby all shall be judged and whereby man's guilt is to be determined, is the moral law—the Ten Commandments which God ratified amid the lightnings and thunders of Mount Sinai. (Exod. 20:3-17.) Hence the wise man could truthfully affirm that to "fear

God, and keep His commandments . . . is the whole duty of man." Eccles. 12:13.

The Bible shows, however, that while the ultimate penalty for all guilty men—whether the powerful political tyrant or the wayward nonentity—is eternal death, there are degrees of punishment. The process whereby death is inflicted will vary with the degree of guilt. The fire of God's glory which consumes the wicked, will conceivably complete its work with those of lesser guilt in a brief moment, while the sufferings of others will be more prolonged.

It would be unfair, for example, for one who has backslidden after a long life of Christian service to suffer as much as such callous monsters of cruelty as the Emperor Nero. And it would be equally wrong for even Nero to suffer as much as Satan. That the process of inflicting the final punishment will vary with the individual is proved by our Lord's statement that the "servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." Luke 12:47, 48.

Determining Factors

There are many factors which God must and will consider in determining men's punishment. Primarily will be that of privilege. More will naturally be expected of those living in a Christian community having freedom to worship, and access to God's Word, than of those who are bereft of religious enlightenment such as the African heathen. If, in spite of their great privileges, the former neglect the means of freeing themselves from the guilt of sin, their punishment will be considerably greater than that of the latter who neglect to nurture and follow the "light" of conscience "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9.

Comparing the privileged Jews of His day with the less privileged inhabitants of ancient Tyre and Sidon, the Lord declared: "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." Matt. 11:22. Not that Tyre's sins would be condoned, but that far fewer "stripes" would be administered in the process of executing the death penalty, than in the case of those Jews in Christ's day who rejected their Messiah.

The Judge will likewise consider the circumstances of birth and environment. He is just,

and knows that certain conditions are more conducive to sinning than others. Thus we have the inspired assurance that "the Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there." Psa. 87:6. The wayward person born in a slum locality, of dissolute parents, will receive far greater lenience in the day of judgment than the equally wayward person whose environment and background is one of respectability and religion. The sins of the two may be identical, but in God's sight the latter will be far more guilty than the former.

The nature and effect of men's sins will also be determining factors in the judgment. Some sins are powerfully disruptive while others are of lesser consequence. The influence of some sins spreads far beyond the confines of the perpetrator's heart, while other sins are indulged in secretly, unknown and unseen by all save only the sinner and the Lord who "searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." 1 Chron. 28:9. All these sins will, if unconfessed, be punished with the death penalty, though the preliminary suffering which ends in eternal oblivion will vary considerably.

We think of such widely influential works as those of the great atheist, Thomas Paine. His writings have led countless thousands to reject God and to make religion a mockery. His sin was that of failure to obey the first four commandments; but it was made infinitely worse by his vehement determination to lead others into similar infidelity. Some have thought that the punishment of such infidels will be determined solely by the actual influence of their evil works. For God to be just this could not be entirely so; otherwise someone equally determined to destroy Christianity, but living just before the end, would have a much lighter punishment by virtue of there being no time for his evil influence to spread. The heinousness of a sin is judged therefore not only by its actual, but also its possible influence and aftermath, and by the vehemence with which the

sin has been committed. Thus a latter-day Paine will endure equal punishment to that of Paine himself. Opportunity to implement a sinful plan will serve not so much to determine the degree of punishment in the judgment day—for many evil-willers lack the opportunity to be evil-doers—but rather as a revelation of the heinous character of the sin. The spirit with which such sinful tendencies are cherished will be the great determining factor in the judgment.

Christ declared the Jews of His time guilty of all the blood of holy men which had been shed since the days of Abel, because, though proud of their piety, their spirit was identical to that of the ancient prophet-slayers whose misdeeds they deplored. (Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:47-51.)

A Purged Universe

The fate of all guilty men and women will be that of everlasting extinction. God's universe is finally to be swept clean. In His love and mercy, God has made this abundantly clear, for He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9. His warnings are ample and detailed, not because of a desire to alarm or terrify us, but as an added inducement for us to accept the Saviour Jesus Christ and by faith exchange our guilt for His spotless innocence. Let those who seek salvation remember that apart from Jesus "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. In this sense, Jesus declares Himself to be "the door." "By Me," He says, "if any man enter in, he shall be saved." John 10:9.

"Now is the day of salvation," says Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:2. But the day is far spent. This world's period of probation is almost finished. Soon heaven's door of mercy will be closed, and every individual's eternal destiny will be finalized. When the judgment day dawns, may we be numbered among those who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12.

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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

The Story of a Word

At first it was only a little cross, selfish thought in Johnny West's heart. If the heart had been full of love to God the thought wouldn't have had any room there. Johnny had never asked God to give him a clean heart, and this naughty thought was only one of many that were always making trouble.

The thought grew very rapidly, and somehow slipped into Johnny's mouth, and when it reached his lips, it changed into a word—a loud, hateful, cross word to his baby sister.

Although it was only a word, it made the baby cry, and brought a shadow to his mother's face.

"Oh, my son!" she said, "how can you speak so to your little sick sister?"

Johnny went to school, and was very unhappy. He wished that he might call back the word. But no! The swiftest horse could never overtake it. It was going on and on. And God knew that it belonged to Johnny West.

Johnny went home at noon. His mother was very pale.

"The baby is worse," she said.

Johnny bent over his mother's lap and kissed the baby. She was such a pretty baby, and had just learned to

walk! When she saw Johnny, she was afraid of him, and turned with a little cry toward her mother.

Johnny went out and sat on the kitchen doorstep, and wondered why the sun didn't shine any brighter. It seemed as if that word was between him and the sunshine.

That night the baby died. When Johnny saw the sweet, still face, and tiny, cold hands,

A BOY'S CHANCE

A boy has a chance to become a man,

A man with his head held high,
A man who can lead, a man who is strong,

A man with a fearless eye.

A boy has a chance to become a king,

A king with a royal throne,
A ruler of heart and mind and voice,

A ruler who sways his own.

A boy has a chance to become a friend,

A friend who is tried and true,
A friend who is ready with helping hand

Some deed of good to do.

A boy has a chance to be oft with Him—

With Him who alone brings joy,
With Him who became the Man of men,

With Him who was once a boy.

—Selected.

he cried as if his heart would break. But tears could not bring back the little sister.

"Oh, Mother!" he sobbed, "if she will only come to life again, I will be so good to her. Oh, if I hadn't said that word!"

"God will forgive the word, since you are sorry, my son," replied the mother.

"But it will always hurt!" moaned Johnny.

And, though he started that day to be a better boy, and lived many years doing good, his heart often ached over the word that was once but a selfish thought.—Selected.

A Thank-You Letter

By Mabel-Ruth Jackson

"MOTHER," said Marjory, putting the plates on the table for dinner, "I had such a good time visiting Cousin Jean."

"Did you, dear? I thought you would," smiled her mother.

"You know, I thought I wouldn't like being on a farm at all," Marjory confessed, "but I did—every minute of it!"

"I used to live on a farm when I was a girl," said her mother. "I thought it was the best place in the world."

"I think I shall write to Jean and tell her what a good time I had," said Marjory, laying the silver by the plates.

"I'm glad you thought of that yourself, dear," said her mother, looking pleased. "That is called a 'bread-and-butter letter.'"

"Bread - and - butter?" repeated Marjory, puzzled.

"I don't know how they came to call it that," her mother said, "but it means a letter one writes to her hostess after she has made a visit. You

might also call it a thank-you letter."

"The table is all set, Mother. May I write it now?"

"I think you'll have time before Daddy gets home," said her mother.

Marjory sat down before her writing desk and took out her box of stationery. Each sheet had a coloured picture in the corner. She wrote:

"Dear Cousin Jean: I am writing to tell you what a good time I had visiting you and how nice you all were to me.

I had such fun feeding the chickens, especially the little bantams, and watching your father milk the cows. The little kitten you gave me is so lovely. She chases her tail, and we play hide-and-seek together. I call her Patsy. Do you think that is a good name for her?

"I hope you can come and visit me soon and I will show you what we do in the city. Please give my love to Uncle John and Aunt Susan.

"Your loving cousin,
Marjory."

When the letter was stamped, she ran to the corner where there was a pillar-box. Standing on her tiptoes, she pushed the envelope in.

"There," she said to herself, smiling, "my bread-and-butter letter is on its way. I'm always going to remember to write one after I have been visiting someone."

THE LIE

Dear God, I told a lie to-day.
I thought it was an easy way
To hide some things that I had
done

From Mother, and from everyone.
Please, God, forgive me, and I'll
try
To never tell another lie.

Help me to learn when I am
young

That no one trusts a lying tongue.
When I tell Mother I was bad,
I hope she won't be very sad;
For if You help me, God, I can
Grow up to be an honest man.

Amen.

—Morgan Shepard.

Results of Competition No. 5.

Prize-winners.—J. Dowell, The Dell, 45 Cotmer Road, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft. Age 12; Siegfried Baron, 10 Railway Street, Church, Nr. Accrington. Age 10.

Honourable Mention.—Maureen Mitchell (Lowestoft); Margaret Cutler (Langley); Margaret Johnson (Rochester); Nigel Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Dorinda Sullivan (Bournemouth); Kathleen Thomas (Stratford); Berice Bryant (Lowestoft); Shirley Lade (Hastings); Maureen Walsh (Hove); Christopher Cumings (Shenfield); Ivan Tann (Fareham); R. Wilson (Norden); Eleanore Baron (Church).

Those who tried hard.—Connie

Freeman (London, S.W.20); Barbara Case (Birmingham, 6); Dorothy Holder (London, N.4); Judith Lacy (York); Amy Randlesome (Beccles); Avril Baker (Newport); Ruth Johnson (Rochester); Rita Kent (Lowestoft); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Maureen Woodman (Bassett); Pat Moden (Bristol, 4); Myrtle Jopling (Abbots Langley); Barbara Cammish (Sheffield); Betty Campion (Torquay); Barbara Manison (Erdington); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Isabell McMillan (Kilmarnock); Patricia Coates (Hove); Brenda Plant (Draycot); Josephine Dunstan (St. Mabyn); Valerie Smith (Thorpe); Jelda Sleeman (Torquay); Raymond Hodgkin (Richmond); Barbara Keen (Lowestoft); Caroline Catto (Rickmansworth); Kathleen Walsh (Birmingham, 11); Robert Lipscomb (London, S.E.6); Shirley Grieg (Orkney); Esther Dunstan (St. Mabyn); Joan Sanderson (Hull); Richard Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Patricia White (Plymouth); David Balderstone (Watford); Ian Wilson (Chesterfield); Laurence Edward (York); Gail Hilton (Ashton-under-Lyne); Ellen Heppell (Honiton Clyst); Veronica Lawe (Greenock); Ruth Campion (Upton); Pat Smith (Honiton Clyst); Ann Hembling (Stockton); Pauline Rawcliffe (Bradford); Diana Hustwait (Rushden); Raymond Jeffrey (Enfield); Heather Page (Hayes); Elizabeth Moody (Lincoln); Derek Kerr (Edinburgh); Joyce Gill (Rye); David Morton (Edmonton); Diane Darroch (Barry); Michael Dunne (St. Albans); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Rita Moss (Southampton); Anne Miles (Ightham); David Simmonds (Watford); Ruth Balderstone (Watford); Marlow Padget (Wokingham).

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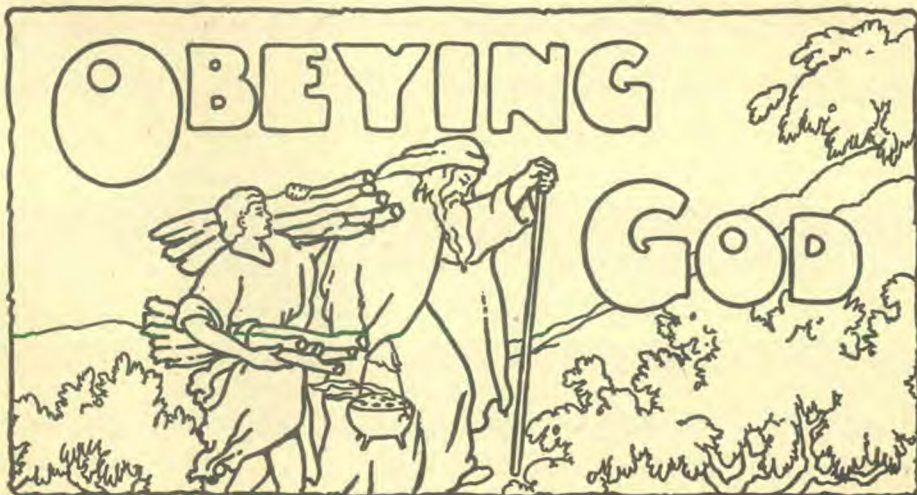
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STRAWS



WIND

TATTOOED WITH RUINS

"THE world is to-day tattooed with ruins," writes German Arciniegas in the Unesco publication, *Freedom and Culture*. "But those that horrify us are not those of cities reduced to a heap of dust, but those of men corroded by the venom of hatred."

FOSSIL IVORY SALE

AMONG the £50,000 worth of ivory recently sold in London was some fossil mastodon ivory from Siberia. These creatures perished at the time of the flood.

ROAD TOLL

ROAD accidents are at present resulting in some 4,500 deaths per year and 20,000 lesser casualties every month. Earl Howe has suggested that probably four-fifths of them are really avoidable.

MORE EXCAVATIONS AT JERICHO

It is good news to learn that new excavations are to be undertaken at Jericho, following up the brilliant work of Professor J. Garstang, which was suspended some fifteen years ago. New light on outstanding problems of the Exodus may confidently be anticipated.

The Dance of Death

(Continued from page 10.)

can war to something in the region of forty-five or fifty billions, which is about eleven and a half per cent of the national income.

Besides equipping these vast forces with the latest and deadliest planes, guns, tanks, guided missiles, and atom bombs, the United States is giving billions of dollars and vast quantities

of equipment to European nations, to bolster their efforts to combat the Soviet menace.

How fantastically British war expenditure has increased since before World War II was revealed by Donald Bruce in the *Tribune* recently when he pointed out that her expenditure in the "rearmament" year 1938-1939 before the outbreak of World War II was no more than £254 million or less than one-third of present spending.

Where, we may well ask, is all this incredible expenditure, and the withdrawal of millions of men from productive labour, leading? The answer is obvious. As John Foster Dulles asserts in his recent book, *War or Peace?*: "If history is any guide, war will come out of this situation."

And when it comes, with all the horrific weapons which are being secretly amassed, it can have only one end, the destruction of civilization as we know it.

Jesus' words have proved absolutely right and to-day world "distress" has reached the place where, humanly speaking, there is "no way out." Left to itself, mankind cannot but commit world-suicide. The only way which now remains is for God to act. And that is just what He has promised to do.

Sooner than perhaps even the church realizes, Christ, in response to the call of His Father, will return to halt man's self-destruction and cause "wars to cease unto the ends of the earth" by the subjugation of all earthly power and the establishment of His own universal kingdom.

Well may the church of God voice its fervent acquiescence in the only solution to the human predicament in the words of the Revelator, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

