



THE BIBLE AND

OUR TIMES

Why I Believe in Jesus

By Edward A. Butters

Christ. James indeed refers to the fact that "the devils also believe, and tremble." James 2:19. So the greatest of all questions is, "What think ye of Christ?"

His Coming Was Foretold

I believe in Jesus not merely as a "lovable Man" but as my Saviour, first because the Bible, which is the Book of God, so remarkably foretold His birth, life, and death hundreds of years before He was manifest in human flesh. A few examples must suffice.

In Micah 5:2 we are told: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, . . . out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity." (Margin.)

This was the text that was quoted by the priests and scribes when asked where the King of the Jews was to be born. As a result the wise men found Jesus and worshipped Him.

That He would be born of a virgin and would be carried down to Egypt later were foretold in Isaiah 7:14 and Hosea 11:1. The slaughter of the innocents was prophesied by Jeremiah. (Jer. 31:15.)

The last scenes of His life and His death are so vividly portrayed by the ancient prophets that to read their words one would almost think they were eye-witnesses. Zechariah saw Him riding into Jerusalem on an ass to the accompanying shouts of "Hosanna!" from the crowds. (Zech. 9:9.) Isaiah records His being silent before His judges. (Isa. 53:7.) Even the very words on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" were anticipated in Psalm 22:1. In the same psalm the manner of His death by the piercing of His hands and feet and the gambling of the Roman soldiers over His seamless garment are referred to in verses sixteen and eighteen. Psalm 16:10 gave the assurance of His resurrection. It is in fact estimated that at least twenty-four prophecies



By Ludwig Otto

© Camera Clix

Mary sits at the feet of Jesus in her Bethany home.

★ JESUS Christ, the carpenter of Nazareth, is the greatest character in history. Not only do His friends acknowledge this, but also His enemies. The late Mr. H. G. Wells writing in the *American Magazine* some years ago, stated: "Jesus of Nazareth is easily the dominant figure in history. . . . More than nineteen centuries later, a historian like myself, who does not even call himself a Christian, finds the picture centring irresistibly around the life and character of this simple, lovable Man." But this kind of belief is not a *saving* belief in

were fulfilled in the last few days of Jesus' life and at His death.

His Claims Are Unanswerable

I believe in Jesus because He made such amazing claims about Himself and I am led to the conclusion that unless He was the biggest impostor that ever lived, He must be the promised Messiah. He asserted that He had lived before His earthly phase of existence. "And now," He prayed, ". . . glorify Thou Me . . . with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." John 17:5. To the Jews He said, "Before Abraham was, I am." John 8:58. He claimed to be able to forgive sins and this is the right of God alone. When the Pharisees asked, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" He answered: "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy,) . . . Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." Luke 5:24. In at least six places the gospels speak of men and women falling down and worshipping Him, and we know that worship is due to no-one but God. In Revelation 22:8, 9 John was about to worship the angel who had brought to him the wonderful revelations of the book. "See thou do it not," said the angel, "worship God." Clearly Jesus claimed divinity.

He also made a tremendous claim when He declared, as He did so many times, that He would return to this earth. His promise in John 14:1-3 makes this very plain.

Either His claims are true and He is God or else He has perpetrated the greatest and longest-lasting deception that has ever been foisted upon the world. I believe His claims can be proved and that He is the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Belief in Him Changes Men

I believe in Jesus because of what I have read and heard concerning the experience of those who have given their hearts to Him. I read of islands in the South Seas where a few years ago the inhabitants were cannibals while today they are kindly, law-abiding Christians. Of one island a government officer declared that the 2,000 natives were so dissolute that they would be extinct in a short time. Five natives from another island went there and preached Jesus to them. After six months this same officer wrote the Mission Board that the island had been changed from an "abode of devils to a paradise of God."

I have talked to men who at one time were drunkards and the despair of good mothers but

today, after having met this Jesus, they are Christian gentlemen. One who had an accident during the war told me that his bones would not heal because he was so besotted with alcohol from his former drunken life. Today he has gone blind as well, but his constant theme when asked to speak in a meeting is of his joy and happiness and the goodness of God. Nothing but the power of a risen Christ could do that for a man.

He Has Changed Me!

The final and greatest reason why I believe in Jesus is for what He has done for me. Like the Samaritans who on the recommendation of the woman at the well went to see and hear Jesus I can say: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." John 4:42. I saw myself as what I was, a sinner with no hope of getting into the heavenly home of which the Word of God taught. Then there came to me the full comfort of Paul's assurance: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." That meant me, that fitted my case, and I accepted the merits of His blood "which cleanseth us from all sin." (1 Tim. 1:15; 1 John 1:7.) I realized that His death on Calvary paid for my past sins, that the power of His Holy Spirit would help me in my present fight against sin, and that one day He would come to take me from the very presence of sin.

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.

There was none other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven and let us in.

When I think on all these great facts I must exclaim with the poet, "If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now." Dear reader, will you not also join me in the prayer, "Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for Thee"?

PETITION

*God bless us, as we sit at meat,
God guard us when we are asleep;
God help us this and every day
To live more nearly as we pray.*

HELEN M. TURNER.

"NONE OTHER NAME"



By Ernest Cox

★ IN the very early days of the Christian church, the apostles Peter and John were brought on one occasion before the high priest and his associate dignitaries, to answer for their faith.

Being "filled with the Holy Ghost" and speaking with great forcefulness and power, Peter concluded his impassioned defence with a supremely challenging declaration concerning his beloved Master, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

Peter realized that the coming of the second Person of the Godhead into this world, being the very "mystery of godliness," is a fact beyond human comprehension, and yet it is the one and only means of our salvation.

The New Testament opens with the simple story of how Jesus came "and dwelt among us." John 1:14. A right understanding of the incarnation of our Lord is the key to all accurate religious knowledge. Unless there is an unqualified acceptance of the gospel histories, with all that they imply, there can be no real appreciation of our Lord's atonement, nor of His priesthood, nor of His ultimate function as our Judge. The very starting-point of our eternal life in heaven is His life on this earth.

Jesus Revealed God

It was only when Jesus came that mankind began really to learn the meaning of the essential father-



Native children in Africa listen to the story of Jesus.

© Keystone

hood of God. He declared: "I . . . show you plainly of the Father. The Father Himself loveth you." John 16:25, 27.

It is also mainly through Jesus that we know what little we do know concerning the majesty and the mystery of the Holy Spirit that mighty, yet infinitely compassionate Being who was present at the birth of this world, present at the birth of our Lord, and is so wonderfully present at the "new birth" of every child of God. (John 3:5.) Jesus said of Him: "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:17.

But in addition to Christ's showing us the Father, and showing us the Spirit, with almost equal significance He showed men to themselves. Much of the Old Testament is a sad recital of man's failure and folly, but it is only as we come to the New Testament, that we really see ourselves as we are, as we compare our sinfulness with His sinlessness, our folly with His faithfulness, our weakness with His strength.

So it becomes unspeakably precious to us, as believers, to realize that in the Bible, Christ

Himself is set forth as the great Object of our faith. The Scriptures set before us, not so much an elaborated system of religion complete in every detail, not so much a philosophy of belief, as a *Person in whom to believe.*

He Came to Save From Sin

The Bible points us straight to a Person. The Bible tells us, over and over again, that there is no way of avoiding that Person. We may try to evade Him. We may attempt to ignore His counsel or to discount His claims, but that is to encounter disaster at last. For He is the Way of salvation, and the only way. (John 14:6.) "There is none other name . . . whereby we must be saved."

When we come to the actual birth into this world of this Son of Abraham, this Son of David, this Son of God, a most far-reaching announcement is made concerning Him and His earthly mission. To His foster-father, Joseph, the instruction is given, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21.

Here we have the Saviour's name divinely interpreted. God's Word itself, tragically enough, has become a veritable battleground of often bitterly conflicting interpretations. But the Father Himself has decreed that there shall be no confusion regarding the Saviour's name. Its simple meaning is to be for ever clear: "He shall save His people from their sins."

That was the meaning of His name and of His life. That was the purpose of His death, to "save His people from their sins."

The mental scientist of today—the psychologist—will analyse your sins. He will explain, according to his training and conception, their probable cause and effect. But as to saving you from them, ridding you of them by means of a mighty, invincible Power outside of yourself, that is something altogether beyond the mental scientist's sphere. He cannot save you from your sins. Only Jesus can do that.

But that is what He came to do. His salvation can cleanly eradicate the very root

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

Adoption Into the Family of God

Then the further blessed implication of His name surely is that those who are thus saved by His infinite grace, thereby become *His* people. As the poet triumphantly sings,

Conqu'ring kings their titles take
From the foes they captive make:
Jesus, by a nobler deed,
From the thousands He hath freed.

Yes, none other name is given
Unto mortals under heaven,
Which can make the dead arise,
And exalt them to the skies.

It is certainly true that no-one but Jesus "can make the dead arise." We, "who were dead in trespasses and sins," know that. We, who at one time were so devoid of spiritual inclination, so unresponsive to spiritual invitation, know that Jesus alone freed us from that moribund state and now we are "free indeed." John 8:36.

Then, after recording the Saviour's name as given to Joseph, Matthew recalls His name as given, generations before, to Isaiah. "They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matt. 1:23.

Like everyone else who has known the riches of His grace, Matthew loves, apparently, to enlarge upon the Saviour's glorious name. It further means, he says, that Jesus is God. It means also that He delights in the God-like activity of saving us, His unworthy creatures, and exalting us "to the skies."

May we, when the kingdom comes, be found among that happy throng who will gratefully acknowledge the wondrous efficacy of the Saviour's name.

© Keystone
Multitudes still take other names than the name of Jesus on their lips in worship. To them the Gospel of Christ must be brought.

OCTOBER 29, 1953



Our Lord Will Return

But How? When?

By Victor Hall



© Three Lions

Before Jesus ascended to His Father, He promised that He would come back.

★ "LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. . . . And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

This promise, precious to the disciples when it was made by the Lord Jesus, is even more precious today in a world of troubled, fearful hearts. I would believe it were it His only promise—but when one in every twenty-five verses of the New Testament mentions the coming of the Lord, it becomes the centre of my hopes for the future, the most joyful news I can bear to men and women who know Jesus as their Saviour.

It has saddened me, when talking to even professed Christians about the nearness of the second advent to watch their facial expressions and hear words which so plainly tell that the Master whose

name they bear would be unwelcome if He should choose to come just now. Parted lovers long and pray for the day of return and reunion—unless the heart has grown cold during absence, or found another love. As in human relationships, so in heavenly. Only the unfaithful or the estranged heart fails to beat with warm expectancy at the prospect of Jesus' soon return.

Every Eye Shall See Him

As His disciples watched Jesus receding from view on the ascension day they were told: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:9-11. This same Jesus, who had been Friend, Teacher, and Master for three and a half years; this same Jesus who bore their sins and ours to the cross to meet their penalty for us all; this same Jesus who rose from the dead, whose wounds convinced the disciples that He was indeed their resurrected Master; this same Jesus who today still gently knocks for entrance into our hearts; this same Jesus shall return.

He will return "in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." "He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Acts 1:11, 9. So we are not surprised that Jesus Himself said: "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." How great will this glory and majesty be? "He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." Just as the eyes of the world were trained upon the glittering spectacle of the Coronation procession some months ago, the coming of Jesus is not stealthily done in a corner. It is as public as the lightning. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of

the Son of man be." We shall need nobody to tell when the coming of Jesus takes place, for: "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him." Matt. 24:30; Luke 9:26; Matt. 24:27; Rev. 1:7.

You may say: "I know earnest Christians who believe that Christ has already come. Others believe that He reveals Himself in spiritist séances in fulfilment of His promise to return. Others, equally sincere, believe that God's elect will be snatched from the earth secretly and the coming of Jesus known to have taken place only by their sudden absence. You tell us that every eye shall see Him when He comes. So many differing ideas are confusing. What shall I believe?"

Jesus knew that the revival of true advent preaching marking the approach of the great event would be accompanied by many and varied ideas concerning the manner of His coming. There would even be counterfeit advents. "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets." How shall we judge the genuine from the false?

Jesus will come in such a way that cannot be imitated. "Behold," He assures us, "I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: Behold He is in secret chambers; believe it not." "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not." Matt. 24:23-26. These warnings, "Go not forth," "Believe it not," clearly show that we need not even investigate any claim that Christ has come. If we have not seen it ourselves, it has not happened. "Every eye shall see Him"; "for as the lightning . . . so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." The devil himself will not be able to imitate the glory of Jesus' appearing as revealed in the Scriptures. Jesus' word is our only safeguard.

It is not only unnecessary to investigate any claim that Christ has appeared, but also dangerous; for the "false Christs, and false prophets . . . shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24:24. Signs and wonders can sway, persuade, and deceive the senses. "Go not forth. . . Believe it not." So widespread and confused will ideas be concerning the manner of Christ's coming that Jesus' actual appearance will be hailed, not with joyous acclamation as was our Sovereign's in her triumphant procession, but with wails of fear and despair. "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:30.

In an Hour When Ye Think Not

Jesus is emphatic that we must know the manner of His coming. But the time is a mystery. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only." Matt. 24:36. "Why then," you may ask, are you so positive that Christ's coming is near if nobody knows when it will take place?" Because Jesus also said of the events preceding His appearing, "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Verse 33. Our very ignorance of the time should make us diligent to understand the signs of the times. And surely when scientists and statesmen outdo the preachers in their warnings of the end of the world, it is not hard to read the writing on the wall. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:42, 44.

"I Will Receive You Unto Myself"

To consider Jesus' purpose in returning gives us the true measure of its importance. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28. As sin-bearing Saviour, in obscurity and humility, He came at first. As conquering King and Judge, in glory and majesty, He will return. He comes for those who look for Him. "I will come again," He promised, "and receive you unto Myself." Paul prophesies: "The Lord Himself"—this same Jesus!—"shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17. A thrilling prospect for every soul who knows and loves his Lord!

Notice that Paul's description gives a reason why Jesus warned us to reject as false all claims that Christ had come and was in the desert or in secret chambers. Jesus does not actually come to the earth, but the redeemed are "caught up . . . in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." How harmonious is truth!

An American was passing comment on the patient determination of thousands of people, despite milling crowds and soaking rain, to catch just a fleeting but personal glimpse of the Queen at the time of her Coronation. He said: "To

(Continued on page 13.)

★ WHEN the great attack upon the Bible was launched at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the first blows were levelled very subtly at the foundations. For, argued the critics, if we can undermine these, the whole superstructure of inspiration and infallibility built upon them will topple and fall! So the critics went to work against what they considered two vulnerable spots.

The Bible, they said, has been copied and re-copied by hand all down the centuries until a few hundred years ago when the art of printing was invented. It can hardly be expected, therefore, that the Bible as we have it today represents at all accurately what was originally written. Still less, therefore, could it be claimed as the inspired Word of God.

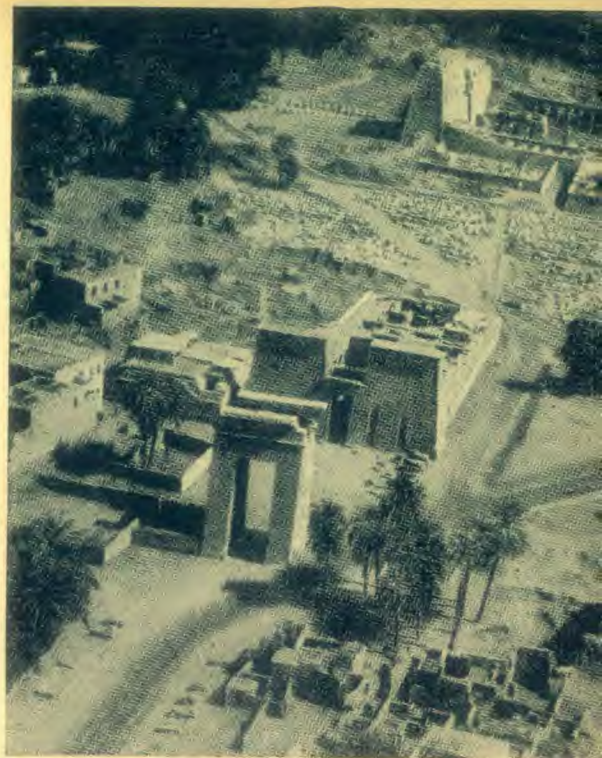
Following up the attack of the textual or "lower critics" came the historical or "higher critics." As a result of their researches they claimed that in many places they found Bible history and geography to be inaccurate, its chronology all awry, its science antiquated, and its account of the origin of the earth and the living creatures upon it contrary to the findings of modern scientific studies. Furthermore, the miracles of the Bible and all evidences of supernaturalism were quite out of harmony with the reign of law in the natural world.

Under the hammer blows of the critics the foundations of the Bible seemed to many to be tottering, but today we know that the critics spoke much too soon. For since then archaeological and scientific research have completely reversed these hasty judgments and have proved not only the astonishing carefulness with which the Bible text has been preserved, but also the marvellous accuracy of its historical records when checked against contemporary documents and materials which have come forth from the dust of the ages.

Getting Back to the Original Text

Take first the argument against the genuineness of the Bible text. A hundred or so years ago it was easy to question whether we had the actual words written by the inspired penmen, for we possessed no New Testament manuscripts earlier than the fifth century of the Christian era and no Old Testament manuscripts earlier than the ninth century A.D!

But since that time the situation has entirely changed. Through the discovery in 1859 of the



The ruins of the ancient civilizations in Bible lands have p

Restoring the

By W. L.

Codex Sinaiticus in St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai, and the bringing to public view by the Vatican authorities of the long-held Codex Vaticanus, scholars were able to approach a century nearer to the New Testament originals than had been possible from the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus, upon which the Authorized Version was based.

Just before the close of the nineteenth century, in 1897 to be exact, a papyrus fragment of Matthew's gospel in the actual Greek came to light, and was proved to date from about A.D. 230, or a century older than the Codex Sinaiticus. True, it contained only twenty verses of the first chapter of Matthew, but when compared with the Sinaitic manuscript it was found to be precisely the same text, indicating the careful preservation of this



led a powerful witness to the trustworthiness of the Bible.

Foundations

n m e r s o n

part of the text, and, by implication, of the entire New Testament text during the century which preceded the Sinaitic and Vaticanus manuscripts.

This, however, was by no means the end of the story of the recovery of ancient Bible manuscripts, for in 1930 there came to light from among the unexamined manuscripts in John Rylands Library in Manchester, the so-called Chester-Beatty Papyri containing more fragments of codices of the Gospels, the Acts, the Pauline epistles, and the Revelation dating from the third century of the Christian era.

Two years later in the same library there was found a small fragment of a codex of John's gospel comprising verses 31-33, 37, and 38 of chapter eighteen, of which the librarian, Dr. Guppy said: "It was written when the work of

the original autograph (A.D. 100) can scarcely have been dry."

All these manuscripts have provided evidence of the carefulness with which the Bible text has been preserved and give us confidence that the oldest extant New Testament manuscripts have preserved for us the words written down by the original inspired authors.

Old Testament Critics Confounded

Evidence for the Old Testament text was rather longer in coming in view of the fact that most of the old Hebrew manuscripts were destroyed after the invention of the system of vowel pointing by the Massoretic scribes in the seventh century of the Christian era. In fact the critics made a strong point of the editing and the standardization of the Hebrew Bible by these scholars which, they said, obscured for ever the actual original text. It was difficult for those who believed that the text had been faithfully handed down from earliest times to counter this criticism by reason of the virtual non-existence of unpointed Hebrew manuscripts, but in 1947 the Old Testament text received a most spectacular confirmation as a result of what has been described as "the greatest Bible manuscript discovery of modern times."

This was the finding, by wandering bedouin, in a cave in one of the wadies running up from the Dead Sea into the Judean wilderness, of a number of jars containing many ancient Hebrew documents which long antedated the Massoretic.

Two of these ancient manuscripts proved to be copies of the prophecy of Isaiah, one complete and the other containing chapters forty-eight to fifty-eight. Besides these, fragments of Habakkuk and other parts of the Old Testament were identified.

Since their discovery there has been considerable discussion as to their date, the archaeologists contending for a date somewhere in the first or second century B.C., the philologists for a date somewhere between the third and fifth century A.D.

Whatever the final result of the debate, the value of the Dead Sea Scrolls lies in the fact that they have given to us for the first time tangible evidence that the pre-Massoretic text of this particular part of the Old Testament is identical with that of the Massoretic text from which our Bibles were translated. And from this we may reasonably conclude that the Hebrew scribes just as painstakingly preserved the rest of the Old Testament.

Thus the whole argument of the textual critics

that we cannot be sure that we have the actual words of the original writings may be summarily dismissed. As Sir Fredrick Kenyon says in his book, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*:

"The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, faithfully handed down from generation to generation throughout the ages."

Is the Bible Inaccurate?

While some scholars were finding their way back nearer and nearer to the original Bible documents and demonstrating the accuracy with which the text of both Old and New Testaments have come down to us, others were dealing equally as effectively with the accusations of the historical critics regarding the supposed inaccurate history, geography, and chronology of the Bible which had been advanced to show that the Bible was not even trustworthy, let alone inspired!

Space will not permit here even to begin to condense the findings of scientific archæology during the past fifty years or more which have revealed the absolute accuracy of statements at one time declared to be completely unhistorical and fictitious. We can only mention just a few of the discoveries which have carried the battle right into the camp of the destructive critics.

Typical of the historical inaccuracies which the critics claimed to have discovered in the Bible is their denial of the existence of the Hittite nation, mentioned some forty times in the Old Testament. Since the first traces of this people were found in 1879 by Sayce and Wright, however, their existence has not only been confirmed, but the Hittites have been proved to have been a great nation occupying, at their zenith, the whole of Asia Minor and northern Syria.

The critics poured scorn upon the account of the taking of Jericho by Joshua, and called the statement that "the wall fell down flat" a "mere literary hyperbole." But when, in 1930, Professor John Garstang of Liverpool University excavated the ruins of the famous city he was able to substantiate practically every word of Joshua's account.

"Set side by side with the biblical narrative," says Professor Garstang in a summary of his findings, "the material evidence is seen to bear out, in every essential detail, the record of the capture and destruction of Jericho by the Israelites under Joshua."

The critics refused to believe that Sargon, the Assyrian destroyer of Samaria, and Belshazzar, the

last king of Babylon, according to the Bible, were real kings, but archæological excavation has proved the Bible right in both cases. Today we know every important detail of the life of Belshazzar from his boyhood to the time of his death.

The work of Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur of the Chaldees has shed wonderful light upon Abraham's early home, and archæological research in Egypt, in Palestine, in Syria, and in Babylonia have confirmed at every possible point of test the Bible references to Israel's contact with contemporary nations. Indeed, before his death Professor Melvin Grove Kyle was able to write: "Today after a century of testing at a hundred points, practically this whole historical field [of the Old Testament] has been proved up."

Accuracy of Bible Geography and Chronology

As by painstaking research the ancient geography and topography of Bible lands has been recovered, the geographical references in the Bible have been proved infinitely more accurate than those of Greek, Roman, and other historians of ancient times.

Dr. Christie, who lived in Palestine more than twenty years, stated that, after a lifetime of study, he had not been able to discover a single geographical error in its pages.

The vindication of the book of Acts was one of the triumphs of that brilliant archæologist, the late Sir William Ramsay. He went out to the Middle East as a young man a "worshipper of Wellhausen," the great German higher critic, believing the verdict of contemporary scholars that the book of Acts, credited to Luke, was an untrustworthy work produced in the late second century. As a result of a lifetime of research in Greece and Asia Minor, however, his attitude completely changed and in 1915 he could say that "Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect to its trustworthiness."

The chronology of the Bible, once shot through by the arrows of the critics, has, as a result of subsequent research, been proved entirely in harmony with contemporary documents of the surrounding nations. Professor J. Garstang, in his book *Joshua-Judges*, shows how completely the chronology of the Exodus and the conquest of Palestine ties in with the contemporary chronology of Egypt, and Dr. Edwin Thiele, in his recent book, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, has caused to vanish the supposed discrepancies between the chronology of the Israelite monarchy

(Continued on back page.)



© T. Nelson & Sons Ltd.

The destruction of Sodom is used in the Scriptures as a type of the final judgment upon sin and sinners.

ANTICHRIST'S DOOM

By J. A. McMillan

★ JOHN introduces the seventh and concluding wonder of the Revelation in vivid language. "And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication." Rev. 17:1, 2, R.V.

This dramatic conclusion to the seven wonders or signs of the Apocalypse is in keeping with the climaxes of each of the previous series of sevens in the book of Revelation.

The seventh church, Laodicea, means "the judgment of the people." It contains a warning that the lukewarm will be spurned, and an appeal for

everyone to open the door and invite the Saviour inside. (Rev. 3:16-21.)

The seventh seal brings to a close a series that describes the character of the church down the ages, and reveals the terror that comes when men confront the "wrath of the Lamb" and cry out: "The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" It is immediately followed by an ominous "silence in heaven" as the angels depart to take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,

The Seven Wonders of the Revelation.—7

and from the glory of His power." Rev. 6:14-17; 8:1; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

When the seventh trumpet sounds, the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of God and of His Christ and there is announced: "The time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name." Rev. 11:15-18. Each of these series thus reminds us that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27.

The Great Harlot

The objective then of this seventh sign is to show the judgment of the great harlot. Who is she? The series of signs we have been studying began with a pure woman and ends with an impure woman. The contrast between these two is vivid indeed. The woman of Revelation twelve is clothed with the sun, a symbol of Christ and His righteousness. (Mal. 4:2.) She represents the pure Gospel church in all ages. This great harlot is decked in robes of scarlet and purple, gaudy and brazen as befits "the attire of an harlot." Prov. 7:10. She is the apostate church who has transferred her allegiance from her absent Lord to the "kings of the earth." The pure church is modest; she is bold. The pure church is persecuted; she is "drunken with the blood of the saints." The pure church flees into the wilderness to escape extinction. The harlot church consorts with the kings of the earth. She is in league with the seven successive heads of the beast or ruling powers of the earth. (Rev. 17:9.) She is "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Rev. 17:18.

This harlot is rightly called by the Holy Spirit: "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth." Rev. 17:5. Sober historians have related how the bishops of the Roman church in particular, anxious to break down the distinction between Christian and pagan, accepted one practice after another until the teachings of the Catholic church were truly "baptized paganism." The theory of eternal torment, the immortality of the soul, the invocation of saints, the worship of relics, the sanctity of Sunday, the celibacy of priests and nuns, the infallibility of the Pope, these and many other traditions constitute "the wine of her fornication" with which the harlot has made drunk the nations of the world. (Rev. 17:2.)

"Babylon is said to be 'the mother of harlots.' By her daughters must be symbolized churches

that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world."—*Ibid.*, pages 382, 383.

Since Babylon is here used as a symbol of every corrupt and apostate church, it is idle to apply it to any one system of error. It embraces every form of religion which has deviated from "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Jude 3, R.V. The Lord is more concerned that we heed the warning than that we should identify this or that daughter of Babylon. So the last warning of Heaven is: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. 18:2-4.

Apostate Christians are the offspring of apostate Christianity. This comes when men "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." 1 Tim. 4:1, 2. The only way to avoid this fearful plight is to maintain a sincere "love of the truth" and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ all the way. The offspring of the remnant church, by contrast, "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12. "Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 4:6; 5:2, 3.

End of the Great Apostate

Behind the good woman clothed with the sun is the Lord Jesus, the Man-child "caught up unto God, and to His throne." Rev. 12:5. Behind the harlot is the seven-headed beast. While the seven heads symbolize the earthly powers that have persecuted the church throughout the ages, the beast is primarily "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." Rev. 12:9. He it is who carries the harlot. He it is who inspired the doctrines of Babylon, for the wine of her fornication is the doctrines of devils and seducing spirits. He it is who counter-

feits the redemptive work of Christ and corrupts the truths of God.

The Revelator later saw "an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time. . . . And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. . . . And the devil . . . was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." Rev. 20:1-10, R.V. Thus does the beast that was, is not, and is to come, go into perdition and perish, root and branch. (Rev. 17:8.)

In these seven wonders or signs of Revelation twelve to eighteen we have thus set before us the whole conflict between Christ and Satan through the ages. On the one side is the church of God clothed in "the righteousness of saints." Rev. 19:8. On the other is the synagogue of Satan, clothed in gaudy scarlet and purple.

Many may be thinking that no-one could possibly worship or follow Satan. But listen: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Rom. 6:16. If we obey sin, we become the servants of Satan. If we obey the Lord, we become God's servants. The purpose of this chain of prophetic cartoons is to fasten on our minds this basic truth. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.

We trust that a prayerful study of these prophetic symbols will lead us each one to surrender our hearts to God and follow the Lamb whithersoever He leads us. Then we will be numbered among that great throng whom John saw, even "them that come victorious from the beast and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the glassy sea, having harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of

God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the ages." Rev. 15:2-4, R.V. May we gain that victory and sing that song, with the children of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Lord Will Return

(Continued from page 7.)

actually see the Royal Family in all their majesty gives each person his own moment of majesty." A moment, perhaps never to come again in a lifetime.

When the King of kings appears, and "every eye shall see Him," it will not be a fleeting moment of majesty for those who are ready, but an eternity. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:2, 3.

Some years ago a tourist travelling along the shores of Lake Como in northern Italy reached the castle, Villa Asconati. A friendly old gardener showed him the perfectly kept grounds.

"How long is it since the owner was here?" asked the tourist of the old man.

"Twelve years."

"Does he ever write to you?"

"No."

"From whom do you get your instructions?"

"From his agent in Milan."

"Does he come himself?"

"No."

"Who then, does come?"

"I am almost always alone; once in a while a tourist comes."

"But you keep this garden in such fine condition as if you expected your master tomorrow."

"Today, sir, today."

We should be like that in keeping our soul garden in anticipation of our Lord's return!

- OUR ACHIEVEMENT—
A world-wide broadcast
from 709 stations.
- OUR TASK—
Opening the Bible to the
world

Voice of Prophecy Bible School

Stanborough Park,
Watford, Herts

The facilities of the World's Largest
Bible School are at your disposal.

Listen to our Programme
Radio Luxembourg
Tuesday 5.15 p.m. (B.S.T.)
1,295 metres
Friday 11 p.m. 208 metres

THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

A Boy Can Learn

By Leona Maughan

BOBBY called and called, but Spot did not stop chasing the car until it had passed down the road.

"You are a bad dog!" scolded Bobby. "If you keep chasing cars you will get hurt."

Spot wagged his stubby tail and barked. He wanted to play ball. Bobby shook his head sadly and threw the ball, and for a while the game continued. Soon another car drove along the street and Spot forgot the game while he ran barking after the car. This time, Bobby put Spot on the porch and locked the gate. Of course, Spot did not like to be left alone on the porch, and he whined and coaxed in dog fashion; but Bobby did not want

a car to run over his dog, so he pretended not to hear.

Bobby went to find Mother. She was busy in the kitchen and could not stop her work to play with him. He sat on a chair watching her for a while. Then he said, "I think I shall ride my new tricycle."

"That will be good," answered Mother, "but do not go fast until you learn to guide it better."

Bobby took his tricycle from the garage and wheeled it onto the path. He pedalled slowly up the path and back to the drive again. Then he rode somewhat faster. He was pleased with himself, and pumped his legs up and down faster and faster until

the tricycle fairly flew along. Bobby was thrilled and excited until he discovered that the tricycle was running away with him down the hill. He couldn't guide it, and he couldn't stop.

Suddenly he hit a bump, and over he went! He had a bad fall, and he was badly frightened. His loud cries brought Mother running to see what had happened to him. Spot came through the open gate and barked and tried to lick Bobby's face.

Bobby was not badly hurt; but he had torn his new sweater, and there was a bad scratch on his elbow that *hurt!* Mother tried to comfort him, and they started to the house to care for the elbow. A car went by and Spot forgot about Bobby and ran after the car.

"Oh, Mother," said Bobby, "it seems dogs can never learn."

"Yes," agreed Mother. "It is difficult. It takes patience to train a dog because it takes so much time for him to know what is meant. Spot is only a puppy now, and I know that sometimes it must seem that he cannot learn at all."

She paused and added thoughtfully, "Some boys are like that, too."

Bobby looked down at his dirty, torn clothing and felt his bruised elbow. He was remem-



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than November 12th. (In case OUR TIMES arrives late, still send your entry. All attempts will be considered.)

bering what Mother had said about riding the tricycle too fast, and he was ashamed to think that he had forgotten her words so quickly. "I am sure a boy can learn," he said thoughtfully,

"even if a dog cannot." He looked at Mother and smiled.

"I think so, too," said Mother, smiling. "Now, let's lock Spot on the porch and look after your elbow."

The May Tree

By C. E. Sutton

I WAS sorry when the gardener told me that he must cut down the May tree, for I always admired its pink blossoms in the spring.

"It takes all the sun off the vegetable plot," he replied, "and Master says it must come down."

So old Joe, the gardener, spent all the morning chipping and chopping. When I looked out of the window after tea, the May tree had gone.

Old Joe had gathered the twigs and small branches for his beloved bonfire, which he would probably light on Monday morning when I had hung out my washing in the garden! The bigger logs of wood were to be sawn up, and would be nice for the winter, to eke out the coal.

Old Joe came into the kitchen for a drink, and he sat down heavily on a chair. Working on the May tree had made him very tired.

"Good thing I cut 'im down, Miss," he began. "The whole trunk was rotten as could be."

"Well, whoever would have thought it?" I remarked. "It looked such a lovely tree."

"Ah," replied old Joe, "the whole trunk was rotten, and it might have been dangerous, I reckon, to leave 'im another winter."

Old Joe had brought a sample of wood to show me, and sure enough it was as rotten as could be.

"Appearances be deceptive," he said.

I thought a lot about that

May tree, and I think it was as good as a little sermon. Appearances are deceptive, of people and trees alike. It is what we are, not what we appear to be, that really counts. If our deeds

Alphabetical Couplets

- A is for Adam, the first man of all;
 B is for Babel, that tower so tall.
 C is for corn that in Egypt was found;
 D is for David; his songs are renowned.
 E is for Enoch, who walked with the Lord;
 F is for Famine foretold in the Word.
 G is for Garden of Eden so fair;
 H is for Heaven; we long to be there!
 I is for Island of Patmos so bare;
 J is for John, once a prisoner there.
 K is for Kingdom, and also for King;
 L is for Love—of its Author we sing.
 M is for Manna, from heaven it came;
 N is for nought but the Wonderful Name.
 O is for Og, King of Bashan was he;
 P is for Princess whom Moses did see.
 Q is for Queen Esther, who sat on the throne;
 R is for Room, in the inn there was none.
 S is for Saviour, who came from above;
 T is for Truth that we all learn to love.
 U is for Uncle of Esther so brave;
 V is for Victory we all want to have.
 W for Water that Jesus made wine;
 X for the ten great commandments divine.
 Y is for Someone important—it's You!
 Z is for Zion, the home of the true.
 Elsie Pratt.

and our lives are rotten, selfish, and self-indulgent, we will be useless, and a danger to others.

Let us not be like the May tree, but true followers of Jesus, living useful lives, and being a blessing to those around us.

Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

THE comforting words in our competition picture this time were spoken by an angel to a Roman soldier named Cornelius, who "prayed to God always." Read about him in Acts chapter 10.

God speaks these words to every loyal Sunbeam who keeps Rule No. 2, by saying his prayers every morning and night. Never forget your prayers, will you? It is the boys and girls, men and women, who take time to talk to Jesus, who are made happy and prosperous by Him.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition No. 18

Price-winners.—Jennifer Carter, The Rectory, Combe-in-Teignhead, Newton Abbot, Devon. Ann Maybery, 8 Woodside Road, Bricket Wood, St. Albans, Herts.

Honourable Mention.—David Wright (Heswall); Ivan Clarke (Hemel Hempstead); Philip Charlton (Portsmouth); Maureen Stone (Pennington); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Hilary Jezard (Dover); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Maureen Robbans (Lowestoft); Raymond Clift (Leicester); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Eleanora Baron (Church); Jennifer Grady (Enfield); Siegfried Baron (Church); Ruth Campion (Torquay); Marion Paget (Wokingham).

Those who tried hard.—Sylvia Newton (Edinburgh); Margaret Johnson (Rochester); Margaret Smith (Coreton); Vanessa Norman (Corfe Mullen); Stewart Munn (Carlisle); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Muriel Forder (Norwich); Joy Sealey (Torquay); Miss M. Penny (Cardiff); Clive Maybery (St. Albans); David Smith (Ipswich); Jacqueline Johnson (Mansfield); Graham Ryan (Birmingham); Ronald Grant (Edinburgh); Max Betteridge (Liverpool); Patricia Neale (Bristol); Jane Porter (Plymouth); Mary Porter (Plymouth).

The Bible and OUR TIMES

(Formerly "Present Truth")

Vol. 69, No. 22. Price 3d.

Printed and published in Great Britain fortnightly on Thursday by

THE STANBOROUGH PRESS LTD., WATFORD, HERTS.

EDITOR: W. L. EMMERSON

Twelve months 9/9 post free

Six months 5/- post free

Straws in the Wind

Time for Worship

FROM the latest B.B.C. annual report it appears that for the past four years, three per cent of broadcasting time has been given to religious programmes compared with eight per cent for dance music, ten per cent for talks and twenty per cent each for light and serious music. Television gave only one per cent of its time to religion.

No Welfare World

"WE have had some success in establishing a Welfare State," asserted Mr. T. O'Brien at the recent Trade Union Congress. "But as yet there is no welfare world." This, we are afraid, will have to await the coming of the Kingdom of God!

Restoring the Foundations

(Continued from page 10.)

and that of the Babylonian and Assyrian empires.

While the archæologists were vindicating the history, geography, and chronology of both Old and New Testaments, enlightened scientists were demolishing the allegations of disharmony between the Bible and science.

The late Sir James Jeans did much to show that true astronomy points not to a self-evolving and eternal universe but to a universe created by a transcendent Power who has provided evidence of His character in His works.

"Everything points with overwhelming force," he said in his book *Eos* "to a definite event or series of events, of creation at some time or other. . . . The universe cannot have originated by chance out of its present ingredients, and neither

can it always have been the same as it is now."—
Pages 52, 55.

Pasteur's great discovery of life only from pre-existent life has been vindicated by biological study since his day and in so doing has confirmed the Bible account of the origin of life through the activity of the "living" God.

The work of Mendel and his scientific successors has confirmed the Bible dictum that all living forms reproduce "after their kind" (Gen. 1:11, 12, 21), and not in an evolutionary spiral such as Darwin needed for his doctrine of the ascent of all living species, including man, from some original primitive form of life.

Geological research has similarly brought forth abundant evidences of a universal catastrophe, explainable only by the biblical account of a universal deluge.

Thus the century that has elapsed since the enemies of the Bible announced its imminent fall from the place of honour and authority it had occupied in Christian thinking, has seen the tide of battle turned upon its critics with such overwhelming force as to hurl back the enemy all along the line.

On all counts, the Bible is cleared of every accusation made against it by those who sought to dethrone it in favour of the wisdom of modern man.

Out of its fiery trials the Bible has come forth yet more resplendent. It has justified the expectations of all its followers. It has triumphed over all its foes. The Old Book still stands!

(Next Time:
"The Incomparable Word.")

