



THE BIBLE AND

OUR TIMES

What Is to Happen to JERUSALEM?

By G. D. Keough
(Beirut)



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Above: A street in Old Jerusalem.

Below: Air view of the modern Jewish city.

★ ONCE again, Jerusalem, "the Holy City," has become a focal point in the thinking of the peoples of the world. The United Nations have voted to internationalize it, and the Jews, who hold "the New Jerusalem," are determined to make it the sole capital of the new State of Israel, while the kingdom of Jordania, which is in possession of "the Old City," claims that its strategic importance is such that they cannot relinquish their hold on it to anyone. The city is thus controlled partly by the Jews and partly by Jordania, and neither is willing to surrender its position to the United Nations. Now Jesus, nearly two thousand years ago, made a prediction concerning the fate of Jerusalem, and the present position of the city in international affairs lends immediate and overwhelming interest to His words. Here is what He said: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24.

In answer to their questions, Jesus cited the prophecy of Daniel concerning the destruction of the city and the sanctuary: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand;) then let them which be in Judea [Jerusalem] flee into the mountains." Matt. 24:15, 16.

Successive Desolations

The Saviour was referring to Daniel 9:25-27, where it is predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed after its restoration on their return from captivity. Here was the situation in a nutshell: Daniel was in captivity in Babylon. His city had been destroyed many years before by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. At the time of the destruction of the city, Jeremiah had set a limit of seventy years to the captivity in Babylon, and had promised a restoration at the end of that period, if the

people would repent. (Jer. 29:10-14.) Daniel studied Jeremiah's prophecies (Dan. 9:2), and prayed earnestly, with repentance and confession, for their fulfilment. In answer to his supplications, the angel Gabriel was sent to him with the assurance that the ruined temple and city would be rebuilt, "even in troublous times." Dan. 9:25. At the same time, Gabriel imparted to Daniel the much more wonderful news that the Messiah was about to appear, and he set the time. This was the most exciting revelation that had ever been given to any prophet of God.

The angel however did not stop there. The Messiah, he said, would be "cut off," and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." The Holy City, for whose rebuilding Daniel was praying with all his heart, would not only be rebuilt, according to the promises, but it would be destroyed again. This destruction was to take place consequent on the cutting off of the Messiah: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." Dan. 9:26. Gabriel was indeed predicting, in 538 B.C., that overthrow of the Jews that was accomplished by the Romans in A.D. 70, when they destroyed Jerusalem and its temple and people.

Now Jesus was speaking of this very same event some forty years before its accomplishment, and Matthew reports Him as saying: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let

21:20, 21. The two reports, taken together, make it clear that Jesus was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in A.D. 70, and that He was citing Daniel as speaking of that same event. Jesus was expounding to His disciples the prophecy of Daniel concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

Then Jesus went on to say: "For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21: 23, 24. History testifies to the complete fulfilment of these predictions. Everyone knows that the Jews have fallen by the edge of the sword, and have been carried away captive into all nations, so that we may have the utmost confidence that Jerusalem shall remain in the hands of the Gentiles, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Can we know when the times of the Gentiles began? and when they shall end? We certainly can. The Bible has not left us in darkness on this matter, but has given us the light we need.

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The traditional Garden of Gethsemane.



them which be in Jerusalem flee into the mountains." Matt. 24:15, 16. Luke's version of this same instruction is: "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee into the mountains." Luke

The kingdom of Israel, from the times of Moses, was the kingdom of God on earth. The sanctuary was made as His dwelling place among them (Exod. 25:8), and from its holy place He directed their government, giving daily instruction to Moses

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I Believe Jesus Is Coming Again

By E. A. Butters

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"I will come again," promised Jesus.

★ IF we accept the Bible as the true Word of the living God, we must agree that Jesus is coming again. One in every twenty-five verses of the New Testament tell of it. The Old Testament, too, refers to the second advent many times. The writer of the book of Hebrews definitely links the first and second advents in one verse: "So 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.

We are certain that He came the first time in fulfilment of dozens of prophecies, and it is just as sure that He will come in fulfilment of these others of His second coming. To quote just one prophecy from the Old Testament that speaks of the second advent; the Psalmist, by inspiration, declares: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Psa. 50:3-5.

Jesus was equally emphatic about His coming again. His final words to His friends just before He went out to His death concerned His second coming to the earth.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me," He said. "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for 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.

Not only did He make this declaration to His friends, but to His enemies who were about to put Him to death. "Hereafter," declared Jesus to the high priest at the mock trial He was given before He was sentenced to die on the cross, "shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matt. 26:64.

As if to add extra emphasis to His own promises, Jesus sent two angels back after the ascension to reassure His sad disciples. "This same Jesus," they declared, "which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11.

Almost the last words in the Bible are on this same theme. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen." Rev. 22:20.

It Is the Only Hope

I believe that Jesus is coming again because this old world needs such an event to happen to solve all its problems. Daily we read of disasters on land, sea, and in the air, of terrible weapons of warfare that bring to the heart a sense of terror. Fear is gripping the minds of men everywhere and it can only be relieved by the coming of Jesus. In no uncertain tones Jesus tells His followers to expect these things, for we read in the last days of "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for

looking after those things which are coming on the earth," followed by the promise: "Then shall they see the Son of man coming," and the exhortation: "Then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:26-28.

Earthquakes, tidal waves, and all the catastrophes in nature are but "the whole creation" groaning and travailing—waiting "for the manifestation of the sons of God." Rom. 8:22, 19. Truly as the chorus declares:

"What the world needs is JESUS."

He Must Finish His Work

Again, I believe Jesus is coming back because His work is unfinished until He does. The martyrs and saints who have died are still awaiting the voice of the Life-giver. If there is no resurrection, then, Paul reasons, Christ is not raised, and we are still in our sins. (1 Cor. 15:13-17.) But he can triumphantly declare, "Now is Christ risen from the dead." Verse 20. And because He is risen, He is coming again, and His first work will be to raise the dead. "The dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thess. 4:16. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. 15:26. No wonder Paul closes that chapter in Thessalonians with the words: "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. 4:18.

My Heart Cries Out For It

I believe Jesus is coming again because my own poor heart cries out for it. I know what it means to have my sins forgiven and be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. (1 John 1:7, 9.) By His death on the cross I have been delivered from the penalty of sin. He has given me the power of His Holy Spirit in my life to overcome the besetments of sin, but oh! to be delivered from the very presence of sin. As long as I am in the world, its temptations are all around me. But I know that He is coming to take me away from the very presence of sin. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . . 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.

There is not one person alive today who has a perfect body. This is another reason why I believe Jesus is coming again—to restore mankind to the image of God, according to the original plan of creation. We are very far from that ideal today, but "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus

Christ: who shall change our vile body [body of our humiliation, R.V.] that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Phil. 3:20, 21. "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." Isa. 35:5, 6.

Yes, I fervently believe that Jesus is coming again, and I pray with the Revelator, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20. Will you not pray that with me at this present moment, dear reader?

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as to what he should do in ruling the people. When Gideon was pressed to become their king, he said: "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." Judges 8:23. And when Israel later demanded a king, the prophet of God explained: "Ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations: and ye have said unto Him, Nay, but set a king over us." 1 Sam. 10:19.

Even when they had a king, Israel was the kingdom of God on earth. The king was chosen by God, and he ruled as God's regent. This was true especially of the first three kings, Saul, David, and Solomon. Of Saul God said: "I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath." Hosea 13:11. But He had another in mind to put in his place, and David ruled as the chosen of God. After the division of the kingdom, and Israel's apostasy from God, the Lord declared: "They have set up kings, but not by Me." Hosea 8:4. But Judah yet ruled with God, and was faithful with the Holy One. (Hosea 11:12.)

When Judah also apostatized, and was consequently destroyed from being a kingdom, the kingdom of God on earth ceased to exist, except as it continued in the hearts of faithful men who loved the law of God and served Him. Henceforth the kingdom of God was invisible, for "the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:21. Of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon who took Judah captive, God said through Jeremiah: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, . . . I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by My great power, and by My outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed good to Me. And now I have given all

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"Simply to Thy cross I cling."

★ "LIKE the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay." The Christian's confidence is founded on the conviction that an over-ruling Providence guides the good and bends the evil in the world toward His own benevolent ends. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. 8:28.

We catch a glimpse of God's purpose for our world in the beauteous perfection of the garden of Eden. God created the earth "not in vain, He formed, it to be inhabited" by men and women bearing "His own image," who would "live for ever" in peace and happy security. (Isa. 45:18; Gen. 1:27; 3:22.)

That purpose still stands. God had already made provision for its achievement before He created the world, even if sin should spoil His original plan and apparently thwart His eternal purpose. So when sin did enter, dooming man to death and blighting the fair earth, the Creator was not taken unawares. God, who "cannot lie," had promised eternal life on condition of obedience

Are Any Predestined to be Lost?

By Victor H. Hall

"before the world began." Titus 1:2. Back there, before the dawn of history, the plan was made whereby God's only begotten Son should die in the place of sinful man to provide pardon for his sin and power to make him obedient, fit to live for ever and fulfil his Maker's design. Jesus is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. 13:8.

God had set His heart on having a world populated with perfect people living in happy harmony. This purpose was predestined, that is, determined beforehand, to succeed, because of the divine wisdom and love which assured it. If our first parents obeyed the laws of their life and thereby secured to their children a perfect heredity, God's purpose would be realized by the natural process of procreation. If, on the other hand, our first parents disobeyed those laws—which they did—and passed on evil tendencies to their children that would increase with each succeeding generation, the great plan of redemption provided for reclaiming men and women, cleansing and transforming their sinful natures, and making them fit inhabitants of a "new earth." God's purpose would still be achieved, in this latter case by the supernatural process of re-creation.

Inevitable Doom Unscriptural

Not all men who have lived on this old earth, however, will inhabit the "new heavens and . . . new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. The Bible repeatedly declares that the wicked will be destroyed. In consequence, many have concluded that if God achieves His purpose and in so doing destroys the wicked, then the destruction of some men is a predetermined part of His purpose. The text is quoted: "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son," and it is implied that those who are not thus predestinated

to eternal life are doomed to destruction regardless of their course in life. (Rom. 8:29.)

Is this belief of divine origin? Examine its fruits: the false sense of security it produces in those who believe they are "saved" whatever lives they may lead; the hopeless despair of those who feel they are "lost" however deeply they may desire eternal life and are prepared to meet the conditions upon which it may be obtained; the fearful uncertainty of those who are ignorant of their fate. This teaching strikes at the fundamental truth that "God is love." It makes God unjust, tyrannical, and heartless. It leads men to hate their Maker. Of the planting of this seed in the minds of men it can be truly said: "An enemy hath done this." Matt. 13:28, 39.

Provision for All

By contrast, how strong and beautiful are the plain declarations of God's Word concerning His desire toward all men! God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men," for Jesus is the "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." 1 Tim. 2:4; Titus 2:11; John 1:9. Many are privileged as we are to see "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Others in non-Christian lands may walk by the lamp of conscience, "a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." 2 Cor. 4:6; Isa. 30:21. God loves all men and He draws them all by His Spirit. Jesus "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*." "God was in Christ, reconciling the *world* unto Himself." 1 John 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:19.

But lest we conclude from these statements, as some do, that far from dooming some men to destruction God predestines all men to be saved, let us consider a fundamental principle of all God's dealings with the human race. He invites, pleads, warns, commands, but never does He force our will. He respects the power of choice with which He created man. The only service He accepts is the willing one. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And *whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely." Isa. 1:18; Joshua 24:15; Heb. 4:7; Rev. 22:17.

Richard Baxter said: "I thank God for that 'whosoever.' If He had said 'Richard Baxter' I might have thought He meant some other Richard Baxter, but 'whosoever' means me though I be the worst of all the Richard Baxters that ever lived." "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43. Nobody is excluded from the offer of salvation, because the divine plan makes provision for saving all, if all wish and decide to be saved. But because "the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life," "those who find it are few," despite all that God has done and can do. "Many are called, but few are chosen" because few are willing to meet the conditions on which eternal life may be received. (Matt. 7:14, R.S.V.; 22:14.)

"Whosoever *will*." That little word "will" is the pivot upon which the whole plan of salvation turns where you and I are concerned. Not God's will; for His will is that all mankind be saved and He has done all He can to ensure that they are. No, it is your will and mine. Our eternal destiny depends upon the right exercise of this power of choice.

Periodically a new hydro-electric power station is opened. A huge dam is built across a river valley and an immense volume of water representing tremendous power is stored up behind it. The station is equipped with generators and other machinery for converting the potential power of that water into electricity and supplying light to every home and power to every factory in its area. But not a flicker of light, not an ounce of power flows until the great switch is thrown. The switch has no power of its own, but it makes effective all the power-making and power-supplying machinery.

All the power of heaven is held by Jesus. The plan of salvation is machinery sufficient to supply divine light to sin-darkened minds and divine power to sin-enslaved lives. But God waits for us to throw the switch, to decide to accept the provision made.

The moment we surrender our will to God we become a candidate for citizenship in the earth made new. We are "a new creature." We receive the gift of "eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Titus 1:2. When we thus fulfil God's purpose it can be said of us that "He hath chosen us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Eph. 1:4, 5.

THE END FROM THE

★ WHILE the incomparable teachings of the Bible, the universality of its appeal, and the timelessness of its message are powerful evidences that it is of supernatural origin, that which more than anything else confounds its enemies is Bible prophecy.

The critics may argue that the teachings of the Bible *could* be the fruit of human thought and that the character of Jesus *could* have been invented, but they are utterly unable to explain away the precognition of the Scriptures as the product of the human mind.

The human mind can recall the past through the medium of memory and by written records; the present is experienced through the senses; but the human mind is incapable of penetrating the veil enshrouding the future. True, clever observers may make shrewd guesses as to the outcome of events now taking place, but they have no certain knowledge, and beyond the immediate future all is the merest speculation.

If, therefore, certain individuals manifest the power of accurately forecasting happenings in the distant future in no way deducible from present conditions, and often antagonistic to them, they must obviously be animated by some Power greater than human. This supernatural power must emanate from a Being who is omniscient, to whom the future is as clear as the past.

The prophecies of Scripture are thus the most powerful evidence of the origin of these utterances purporting to be divine revelation.

"There Is None Like Me"

"I am God," says the Author of the Bible, "and there is none like Me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." Isa. 46:9, 10.

Conversely, prophecy serves to expose the pretensions of false gods and spurious holy books. "Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen," says the Author of the Bible again to the worshippers of false gods, whether ancient or modern: "let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come



By T. K. Martin

The great panoramic prophecies of Scripture span

By W. L.

hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods." Isa. 41:22, 23.

"Here," as the historian Milner remarks, "we are not called upon to weigh abstruse conceptions and settle metaphysical difficulties: only to exercise our reason on plain problems of fact; and compare events with prophecies."

Modernists usually avoid the subject of Bible prophecy in their attacks on the divine origin of the Scriptures, and if called upon to offer an explanation of the phenomenon, either suggest that the prophecies were written after the events took place, or attempt to minimize their importance on the pretext that prediction was a negligible part of the prophet's mission.

But both these arguments are transparently

BEGINNING!



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ages from ancient times to our day and beyond!

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false, for in the first place, there are a vast number of prophecies which were demonstrably written before the events to which they allude, and in the second, the proportion of predictive prophecy in the Scriptures shows that it occupies a most important place in divine revelation.

Hundreds of Prophecies of First Advent

Take, for example, the prophecies of the first advent of Christ, of which there are some three hundred in the Old Testament. Now there is no question here of the prophecies being after the event, for even the most extreme critic has to admit that all the books of the Old Testament were written before the first century of the Christian era. Yet the facts are, to mention only a few

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of these prophecies, that His ancestry, the place of His birth, the manner of His conception, the dangers of His earliest years, the place of His exile in babyhood, the course of His ministry, the manner and price of His eventual betrayal, the circumstances of His trial, death, and resurrection were minutely foretold and fulfilled to the very last detail. So accurately was all fulfilled that Paul, in common with the other disciples, was able to confront the Jews with the unanswerable challenge, "This Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." Acts 17:3.

Can it possibly be imagined that any series of writers, spread over many centuries, could out of their own finite minds have built up so detailed a description of a person to be born in a distant age, and for such a description to be fulfilled with such amazing accuracy? It certainly cannot. The Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament witness to the fact that a divine Mind declared through His chosen messengers long beforehand the predetermined details and course of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

Prophecies of Ancient Empires

Then there are the innumerable prophecies in the Old Testament as to the fate of the ancient nations with which Israel came into contact, and in each case the precise details of their future delineated by the prophets were fulfilled with an exactitude which completely eliminates the possibilities of human calculation or foresight.

Of Egypt, prophecy declared, at the height of its glory, that it would become "a base kingdom." "It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations." Ezek. 29:14, 15.

Note, Egypt was not to disappear from among the nations, but it was to be "diminished" to a place of inferiority among them. And so it is today nearly three millenniums after the prophecy was uttered. During this long period, Egypt has been successively subjugated by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, French, and British, and while today it is independent again it is not strong enough even to achieve a place of leadership among the backward Arab nations of the Middle East.

In contrast to Egypt, "Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency,"

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was to be overthrown as utterly "as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there." Isa. 13:19-21.

Jeremiah added that its walls would be "utterly broken" (Jer. 51:58), that it would be "desolate for ever," becoming "heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant." Jer. 51:26, 37.

One has only to visit the ruins of the one-time "golden city" to recognize how absolutely accurately these prophecies have been fulfilled. All that remains of Babylon today are great mounds in the desert. True to the prophecy, the superstitious Arabs avoid the circle of destruction, and the poor soil and lack of vegetation drives the shepherd and his flocks away.

Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was also to become "a desolation," but while the shepherds would shun the site of ancient Babylon "flocks" would "lie down in the midst" of Nineveh. (Zeph. 2:13, 14.) And when I visited Nineveh some years ago what should I see but, true to the prophecy, a flock of sheep feeding contentedly upon the herbage clothing the scattered mounds!

Now how could any finite mind have known that while Egypt would endure, though with greatly diminished status, Babylon and Assyria would cease to be nations, and that while the site of one Mesopotamian capital would be utterly desolate the other would at least serve as a grazing ground for the flocks of later generations! Surely only divine pre-cognition could have made such a certain forecast.

Tyre and Sidon are two ancient cities whose contrasting fates can be read in prophecy and checked in history.

Tyre was to become "like the top of a rock." It would be "a place to spread nets upon," it would "be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it." Ezek. 26:14.

Sidon, on the other hand, though not far away would not be utterly destroyed. It would be deluged with blood and ravaged, but it would never be utterly wasted. (Ezek. 28:21-23.)

To test the prophecy, follow the coast road down from Beirut in Syria and you will come first to Sidon, a city of ten thousand inhabitants, and then to the bare ruins of Tyre lying out from the shore opposite an Arab village on the mainland. Moored among the rocks when I visited the

site were some little fishing boats, and upon one of them a fisherman was actually in the act of spreading his nets to dry!

Again we ask, How could any human forecaster so accurately predict the fate of two nearby cities on the Palestine coast?

Panoramic Prophecies of World History

Finally, there are the great panoramic prophecies of the course of history which began to flow from the pens of the prophets when it became evident that the people originally chosen by God as His instrument of grace had failed Him.

There is not space here to begin to compare the wonderful prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, of Paul and Peter and James, of Jesus the Master Prophet Himself, with their equally wonderful fulfillments from the time of the Babylonian captivity and on through the Christian era to our own time.

Suffice it to say that nations have risen and fallen just as Daniel explained in interpreting the great image dream of Nebuchadnezzar and his own later visions of world empire. The story of the nations in the Christian era and the parallel history of the true church and the great apostasy has been exactly as John and other prophets foretold. And in the events of our day there is to be seen the certain fulfilment of innumerable prophecies of the latter days.

Could human speculation have so clearly foretold the course of two thousand years of human history? For answer one has only to ask how accurate were the self-appointed prophets of the nineteenth century Age of Optimism.

It should be pointed out, too, that associated with these prophecies spanning the centuries are many precise time periods like the seventy weeks of years from the end of the Babylonian captivity to the appearance of the Messiah, and the twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or literal years of papal dominance during the Dark Ages of the Christian era. These prophecies provide a test of prophecy which could not fail to expose it if it were of human origin, for the forecasting of prophetic times spanning millenniums could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be credited to the human mind.

The fact is that no naturalistic explanation of prophecy can be found. It testifies, without a shadow of a doubt, that it came not "by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21.

(Next Time: "The Transforming Word.")

Rendezvous with GOD

By R. E. Finney

all the people of all the ages from all the earth meet in one place. The wicked will be there. The righteous will be there. The angels will be there. God will be there. The hosts of heaven and earth will meet around God's judgment seat. There you and I shall meet!

What mighty events will lead up to that meeting?

Earth's Final Conflict

Just before the second coming of our Lord there will occur the greatest conflict of the world's sanguinary history. Of the setting of this battle we read: "And I saw three unclean spirits . . . go forth unto the kings of the earth, . . . to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Rev. 16:13-16.

This great battle will be cut short by an event that is described in these words: "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. . . . And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." Verses 18-21.

Immediately following this Jesus will return in glory. What will happen then is described by the apostle Paul, who wrote: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself 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



By T. K. Martin

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"We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

★ AT a certain station, I once met a friend who had come a thousand miles from one direction while I had travelled a thousand miles from another, and neither of us knew that we were destined to meet. I have met other friends far from home and with utter unexpectedness. Some day you and I shall meet. It is true that we do not know each other now, and perhaps we shall never learn each other's name, but we shall meet, nonetheless. We shall be in the same place, at the same time, and we shall meet under the most dramatic circumstances it is possible to imagine. When? Where? How? Let us find out.

That meeting will be at the end of that period in history called the millennium. Then and not until then, for the first time and the last time, will

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. 4:15-18.

Note the order of events as related here:

1. Christ descends to this earth.
2. "The dead in Christ" are resurrected.
3. The righteous living join the resurrected righteous, and together they meet the Lord in the air.

Further note that these trenchant verses deal *only with the righteous*. The fate of the wicked is dealt with elsewhere.

After the righteous meet Christ, they are taken by Him to heaven, in fulfilment of His promise; "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for 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 14:2, 3.

What next? What are the righteous to do after they arrive in heaven? Are they to live there permanently with no occupation? "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Rev. 20:6. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." Verse 4.

Whom will they judge? "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" 1 Cor. 6:2, 3.

Many people think that when the righteous go to heaven they are going to stay there but the record indicates otherwise. In the previously quoted words of Revelation 20:6 we read, "They shall . . . reign with Him a thousand years." But why a thousand years? Because at the end of that period the righteous will return to the earth. "And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Rev. 21:2. Within the Holy City are the saints of God, the righteous.

After the Thousand Years

Now in the meantime, what has happened to the unrighteous? Many of the wicked will be destroyed during the seven last plagues recorded in Revelation sixteen, and especially during the great earthquake and hail of the seventh plague. But there will still be wicked people living on the earth when Christ returns. These will be consumed

"with the spirit of His mouth," and destroyed "with the brightness of His coming." 2 Thess. 2:8. This statement is corroborated by others. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 1:7, 8. "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire." Isa. 66:15.

So when the Lord comes to bestow immortality upon the righteous living, He will bring death to the wicked. And they will remain dead for a thousand years. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Rev. 20:5.

Here again is a startling fact we must not pass by. "Until the thousand years were finished." What does that mean? Are these wicked dead to rise again? They are indeed.

But there are some other actors in this titanic drama; the devil and his angels. Of them we read: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Verses 1-3.

The "binding" of Satan and his cohorts is simply the binding of circumstances. With the righteous all removed from the earth and the wicked all dead on earth, there will be no-one left for the devil to tempt or mislead—until the thousand years are finished.

Let us now see where these scriptures have led us:

1. The wicked are killed when Christ comes the second time.
2. They are not raised for a thousand years.
3. Satan is "chained" with his angels on this earth during this period.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." Verse 7. How is he loosed? By the resurrection of the wicked. "But the rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Verse 5.

When Jesus brings the Holy City down from

heaven, *then* Satan will be loosed, "and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." Verses 8, 9.

The destinies of mankind do not move in parallel lines. They converge on one central climactic event. These forgoing events that we have traced lead to this climax. Here you and I shall be in the same place at the same time. Here we shall meet. Here all the wicked and all the righteous—all the ignorant and all the learned—shall meet before God's throne.

Where Will You Be?

You will be there, I will be there. But *where* will we be?

There will be two groups. Only two. One group will be in the Holy City, the other, outside. You and I will be in one place or the other. We may both be inside—in the shelter of His love—or on the outside. *But we will be there!* We can avoid a decision now; we cannot avoid that fateful meeting then.

If we are on the outside of the walls of the New Jerusalem, we shall be eternally destroyed, for "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Verse 9. If we are on the inside, eternity with God will be ours. Let us meet, *inside the walls!*

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17.

What Is to Happen to Jerusalem?

(Continued from page 5.)

these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant. . . . And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come." Jer. 27: 4-8. "The times of the Gentiles" had begun, and

the times of Israel, the visible kingdom of God on earth, had ended.

True, Judah was to be restored, and all of Israel who would respond to the call of God. Isaiah, who lived at the time of the captivity of Israel, one hundred and twenty five years before the captivity of Judah, wrote of their return from Babylon, saying: "Go forth of Babylon, flee from the land of the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the ends of earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob." Isa. 48:20.

This restoration, however, was not to be to their former estate. Neither the kingdom nor the temple would be fully restored. Ezekiel made this plain when he wrote: "And thou, O deadly wounded wicked one, the prince of Israel, whose day is come, in the time of the iniquity of the end, thus saith the Lord God; Remove the mitre, and take off the crown: this shall be no more the same: exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." That they were not free in the days of Jesus was recognized by the Jews. They even chose Cæsar rather than Christ when they said: "We have no king but Cæsar." John 19:15. And His disciples asked Him, after the resurrection, saying, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6.

As soon as God's kingdom on earth has ceased to function, the Lord, through the prophet Daniel, traced in outline the course of the world's history, revealing to them how long "the times of the Gentiles" should last, and at what time the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdom of God. Babylon, he showed, would be succeeded in world dominion by Medo-Persia, and Persia would be followed by Greece, and she in turn by Rome. This fourth empire would be divided, and "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and con-

(Continued on back page.)

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THE CHILDREN'S *Pages*

The Mouse and the Cake

By P. Burnell

MICHAEL was an only child. A very nice little boy in many ways, yet it must be confessed that he was just a wee bit spoiled. Perhaps he wasn't altogether to blame for that, as his mummy and daddy gave him almost all he asked for. Toys and books he had in plenty. Every year at Christmas and on his birthday the number grew—and quite often his daddy bought some extra novelty at the week-end.

As Michael had neither brothers nor sisters, he had none with whom to share his things, so it was not at all surprising that he was inclined to be selfish. Even at school he bossed the other boys and girls, and usually wanted his own way. It didn't always come off, of course—but that was good for Michael!

Well, the time came when Michael's parents decided that he

should go away to a boarding school, where he would have to live and sleep, as well as do his lessons. You see, the school was a long way from Michael's home.

At first he didn't like it very much; there was no daddy to take his troubles to, and no mummy to plead his cause when he had been a naughty boy. It was hard, too, living in a place where things had to be shared. Perhaps that was the most difficult part of Michael's new life.

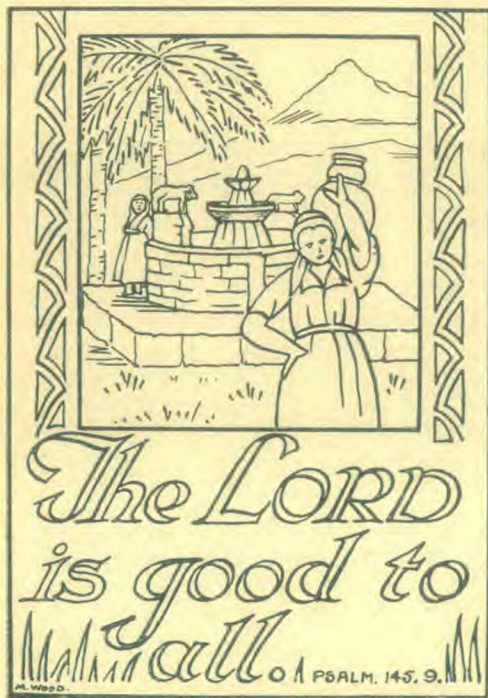
During the first term at boarding school Michael had a birthday. He was up very early that morning, and walked half-way down the long drive to meet his good friend the postman. There were letters, cards, and a parcel—all for Michael! The parcel was a big square box. Yes, you've guessed it—it was a lovely birthday cake! There were ten candles on it.

"Now," said Michael to himself, "I won't share this with anyone; I'll eat it all myself. Every morning at the long break, I'll have a big slice till it has all gone." What a terribly selfish thought! And how it spoiled an otherwise grand little boy!

But where was Michael to keep his cake so that his friends wouldn't see it? That was a problem. Then a thought struck him! In the cloakroom there was an old, disused cupboard—he would put his precious cake in there!

Fine! Just the place! So Michael left his cake in the cupboard and went to his breakfast, making a display of flourishing his birthday cards before his friends—but he said not a word about his cake.

As he had planned, every morning Michael managed to steal away for a slice of cake. Then one morning—a morning he never forgot—Michael went as usual for his slice of cake, but as soon as he opened the cupboard door he noticed there were crumbs on the floor. So he got



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 December 10th. (In case OUR TIMES arrives late, still send your entry. All attempts will be considered.)

down on his hands and knees to investigate—and what do you think he found? Why! a hole in the box. And when he lifted the lid he discovered that there was a great big, ugly hole in his cake.

Ah! ah! a little visitor had found out his secret. Yes, a mouse had decided to help Michael eat his birthday cake. Tears filled his eyes, and began to run down his hot cheeks, and just as he was turning away, partly in bitter disappointment and partly in temper, he felt a hand laid on his shoulder. It was his teacher.

She looked down at Michael and said, kindly: "Michael, why did you do this? I have known your little secret all the time. I've been watching you. You see what comes of being selfish?"

A MISTAKE

By J. Clifford Mitchell

A VISITOR to Switzerland was telling the owner of the hotel where he was staying the big reason why he had come to Switzerland. He said: "I have come to do a bit of climbing." Then taking a map from his pocket, he pointed to the mountain he planned to climb.

"You have chosen a difficult path," said the hotel owner.

"Difficult? That doesn't worry me!" he said with confidence.

"Who have you engaged as a guide?"

"No-one," replied the visitor. "I know the names of several." He pointed to the names of a few mentioned on the map.

"Reno is a very popular guide; have you considered engaging him?"

"I'm not bothering with guides."

"All I can say to that is this, you are running a big risk. I like to see a man who has the spirit of adventure, but unnecessary risks are foolish," he replied. Then he left the visitor

and returned to the hotel office. The next day the visitor ventured out on his climbing, alone. The hours passed, and when night came the hotel owner became very concerned for the lonely climber. He thought of the dangerous paths along which he would walk. It was twelve o'clock when a knock was heard on the front door, and going to the door, he stood face to face with an ambulance driver.

"Sorry, sir, but one of your visitors has been injured on the mountain. He slipped and fell. In fact, he's lucky to be alive."

"I'm not surprised, but I'm sorry. Bring him in; I'll show you to his room."

I have known young people who have made this sort of a mistake. In childhood they have become familiar with the name of Jesus—a living, trustworthy Guide. They have read about Him in the gospels, and know that He said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Then, when they have reached the age of fourteen or fifteen, they have said, like this mountain climber, "I'm going to manage without His guidance. I'm getting big

and strong, so I can get on by myself."

The mountain climber made the awful mistake of thinking he could do without a guide who knew the mountain path, and its dangerous places; and so he came to grief.

Jesus is a Guide who knows the way, because He has walked the ways of this earth. If we avoid Him, we shall be in danger of losing our way.

Let us not make the big mistake of thinking we can climb the difficult path of noble living without the guiding presence of Jesus.

Results of Competition No. 20

Prize-winners.—Eleonora Baron, 28 Warwick Street, Dill Hall, Church, Nr. Accrington, Lancs. Age 14; Trevor Goddard, 34 Barnfield, Iver, Bucks. Age 9.

Honourable Mention.—Marion Paget (Wokingham); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Antony Peart (Gloucester); Richard Payne (Woodmancote); Jennifer Grady (Enfield); Irene Butters (Newcastle); Anne Howard (Nottingham).

Those who tried hard.—Heather Payne (Woodmancote); Amy Randlesome (Suffolk); Dawn Mountford (Stoke-on-Trent); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Allan Foreman (Hull); Margaret Peart (Gloucester); Nigel Payne (Woodmancote); Judith Iris (Croydon); Frank Brown (Suffolk); Sheila Mountford (Stoke-on-Trent); Harold Boynton (Hull); George Mayers (Skewen); Siegfried Baron (Accrington); Adrienne Edwards (Torquay); Nancy Hazelwood (King's Langley); Miriam Harris (Cherterton); Muriel Forder (Norwich); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Margaret (Rochester); Heather Laws (Merton); Beryl Butland (Bargoed); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Elizabeth Quinn (Co. Armagh); Stuart Payne (Woodmancote); Maureen Robbens (Lowestoft); Ronald Grant (Edinburgh); Peter Wingrove (London); Pearl Rich (Camelford); Jean Hocking (Cornwall); Jennifer Clark (Norwich); David Hocking (Cornwall); Arlene Cromie (Co. Down); Paul Howard (Nottingham); Ann Taggart (Glasgow); Patricia Kirman (Grimsby); Veronica Law (Greenock); Stanley Kerr (Grimsby); Carol Nickerson (Norwich); Sonia Lynes (Erdington); Sydney Bateman (Watford); Yvonne Meekoms (Dorchester); Christopher Slade (Watford).

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Straws in the Wind

Megadeaths Now!

THE vast destructive power of the atomic age has coined a fearful new term, "megadeath," for a million victims. It is asserted that an all-out attack by the Soviet Union on American cities might result in a toll of thirteen "megadeaths," and in the British Isles of two "megadeaths."

Hungry World

"OVER 1,500,000,000 people, something like two-thirds of the world's population, are living in conditions of acute hunger, defined in terms of identifiable nutritional disease," states the Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson in his book, *The War on World Poverty*.

U.N. Prayer Room

A PRAYER room has been inaugurated in the General Assembly building of the United Nations headquarters in New York.

What Is to Happen to Jerusalem?

(Continued from page 13.)

sume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Dan. 2:44. History has gone exactly in the way it was outlined here. Those kingdoms ruled in their day, and for the past 1,500 years the divided fourth empire has been ruling. Now, in the days of these kings, the time has come for the restoration of the kingdom of God, the end of "the times of the Gentiles."

The giving of the kingdom to "Him whose right it is" is described in Daniel 7:13, 14. The judgment was set, and "One like the Son of man," was brought in before the Judge, "and there was

given Him . . . a kingdom, that all people nations, and languages, should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

According to this revelation through Daniel, "the times of the Gentiles" will last till the second advent of Christ in glory. At that time all these nations will be destroyed, and the Lord will establish His eternal kingdom which will fill the whole earth. Until that time, Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles, as the Saviour predicted nearly two thousand years ago. The Jews will not regain possession of it.

The present situation of the city, and the struggle for its possession by Israel, suggests that "the times of the Gentiles" are about to end, and it is the purpose of this discussion to call attention to the words of Jesus and the truth of the Word of God spoken by Him so long ago. We wish to invite you to have faith in God and confidence in His Word. Everyone who desires it may have a part in that eternal kingdom which is so soon to be set up. You may become a citizen of God's kingdom right here and now by having His kingdom within you. You may be born from above by God's Spirit, and have His law written in your heart, so that you, by His grace, keep it perfectly, and are ready to enter the visible kingdom when it is set up. "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2. The time, dear friend, is at hand.

Won't you accept the invitation right now? Tomorrow may be too late!

