

THE SPADE AND THE BOOK

by

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I believe in the spade. It has fed the tribes of mankind. It has furnished them with water, coal, iron, and gold. And now it is giving them truth-historic truth-the mines of which have never been opened until our time. - Oliver Wendell Holmes

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1. Archaeological Research in the Land of the Pharaohs

When Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt in 1798, he was accompanied by a group of nearly one hundred eminent scholars and artists. From Alexandria to the First Cataract, a distance of more than six hundred miles, the country was spread out before them like a great museum of antiquities. There were the mighty pyramids, beneath whose shadow the French commander gave his dynamic and memorable address, "Soldiers, from the summit of yonder pyramids, forty centuries look down upon you."

On the fringe of the desert, beyond the reach of the Nile's overflow, were countless tombs with the mummified dead and lavish treasures of ancient workmanship and art. There, too, were numerous pillars, columns, and massive temple ruins—all witnessing to a remote age of marvelous achievement. Under that cloudless Egyptian sky, and in a land seldom visited by rain or frost, the visitors found the works of ancient civilization preserved in an abundance and perfection without parallel.

The French gazed upon the temple walls and monuments covered with strange hieroglyphics, but not a person in Egypt or in all the world understood their meaning. This expedition, however, made a priceless contribution to the science of archaeology by discovering the famous Rosetta Stone, so named because found at Rosetta, a small town near Alexandria. It had been erected about 200 BC by a company of priests, as an expression of gratitude to young King Ptolemy V, and was inscribed in three languages: Egyptian hieroglyphic, demotic characters, and Greek. The latter was easily understood; yet more than twenty years elapsed before astute and patient linguists were successful in deciphering those ancient inscriptions. But what a triumph! The ability to read the Egyptian language as written in the days of the ancient Pharaohs, unlocked for the world vast treasures of a forgotten civilization with its history, science, and art.

How thrilling to find upon those antique records such familiar names as Jacob, Israel, and Joseph! There, too, we read of Asenath (the wife of Joseph), Potiphar (Joseph's master), Potiphera (Joseph's father-in-law), and Zaplinath-paaneah (Joseph's Egyptian name, meaning, "A revealer of secrets." Genesis 41:45.)

While none of these may qualify as the individuals of Bible narrative, it is most interesting to discover that they were the names of real persons who lived in the long ago.

Among the stories written for Seti I, who reigned during the time of Israel's sojourn in Egypt, is one that bears a striking parallel to the account of Joseph in the house of Potiphar. The young man of the incident was trusted with everything about his master's place, was tempted like Joseph, resisted temptation, and was then charged with the crime he was unwilling to commit. Two letters have likewise been found written on clay tablets and addressed from someone in Palestine or Syria to a ruler like Joseph in Egypt.

They bear the approximate date of that period and are in the form of an appeal to a Semite named Dudu (or David), who evidently held the position of prime minister at the Egyptian court.

For centuries the incredulous had regarded the Bible account of a famine in Egypt as mere fiction, but an inscription found on a rock near the First Cataract of the Nile has silenced skeptic unbelief. This narrative tells of a seven-year famine that occurred in the time of the third dynasty. A part of the text indicating the distress of King Koser runs as follows:

“I am very anxious on account of those who are in my palace. The Nile has not overflowed for a period of seven years. There is scarcely any produce in the fields; herbage fails. Children cry. The aged heart is bowed down. The storehouses were built, but all that was in them has been consumed.”

Yet another ancient writing, dating from about the time of Joseph, says:

“I collected corn. I was watchful in time of sowing, and when a famine arose, lasting many years, I distributed corn.”

While none of these records may be positively identified with the incidents and heroes of sacred story, they afford striking evidence concerning the times, the historic reality of famines in that land, and the economic measures employed to meet them.

On a winter's day of 1887, so the recital runs, a native Egyptian peasant woman living on the east bank of the Nile, some two hundred miles south of Cairo, accidentally found a few clay tablets hidden in the soil. Nor should we consider it mere chance, for in the divine providence this was among the most remarkable discoveries of modern archaeology. The woman is said to have sold these to a passing traveler for about fifty cents. Further excavations brought the number up to nearly four hundred, the total of which could not now be purchased for a quarter of a million dollars.

Most singular to relate, the writing on them was not Egyptian but the old Chaldean cuneiform, the homeland of which was a thousand miles distant. What they had actually unearthed was the imperial foreign secretary's post-office department, and upon these ancient bricks are official letters from about twenty kings and rulers of old Palestine and Syria. These have thrown a flood of light upon the social, educational, and political conditions in the times of Joseph and Moses.

Bible critics had long ridiculed the idea of a written language at the time of the exodus; but here is unmistakable evidence of an extensive international correspondence being maintained in patriarchal times. Nearly all these communications were written during the reigns of Amenophis III and Amenophis IV, kings of the eighteenth dynasty.

The Scripture account of Melchizedek had served as a favorite target of infidel attack. A king of Jerusalem at that early period was declared by them as highly legendary and fictitious. But listen: seven of these letters were written by Abdi-kheba, king of Urusalim (or Jerusalem: Uri-city; Salim-peace), and addressed to the king of Egypt. They give us a vivid glimpse of the city nearly five hundred years before David conquered it. Reminding us likewise of Melchizedek, Abdi-kheba declares himself to have been without royal father or mother.

In the opening chapters of Exodus a vivid and accurate pen picture is presented of slavery days in old Egypt. The Israelites were required to build for Pharaoh the store cities of Pithom and Raamses. The latter name naturally points to the noted Rameses II of the nineteenth dynasty as its builder. In the ruins of Pithom, the name of Rameses II is stamped on large numbers of the brick, and inscribed on many stone pillars. Several colossal statues of this monarch were also found amid these ruins. In confirmation of the Bible record, archaeology has given us sculptured scenes of the slaves at work in the brickyards, where the clay mixed with straw was molded and dried in the sun. An inscription states that these cities were constructed “with forced Asiatic labor.” And, most interesting to relate, parts of some of the buildings at Pithom were actually built of bricks without straw. Compare Exodus 5:7-18.

These, and thousands of other discoveries, establish the historical authenticity of the Bible. Not one jot or tittle of the Word has failed; and in the language of W. Newton:

“Every find of archaeologists in Bible lands has gone to confirm Scripture and confound its enemies. The stone has cried out of the wall to witness to the truth of Scripture and to the false character of the critical attacks. Not since Christ ascended back to heaven have there been so many scientific proofs that God's Word is truth.”

2. Dead Cities and Living Men

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A little more than a century ago a young Englishman, Henry C. Rawlinson, was traveling in the heart of old Persia. As he passed the little town of Behistun, and looked upward to a towering cliff of some 1,700 feet, he was attracted by a large plane surface that stood out on the almost perpendicular side of the peak.

After an adventurous and hazardous ascent he found that there were eight columns of inscriptions chiseled in the rock, each about eleven feet in height, by two or three in width. To copy and decipher the writing required years of perilous adventure, patient toil, and arduous study. But triumph crowned the efforts, and at length some of the world's most distinguished linguists announced that the Behistun Rock had furnished the key to unlock three great languages of antiquity—the Persian, Susian, and Babylonian. It sustained the same relation to the cuneiform scripts of those regions that the Rosetta Stone had held to the tongues of ancient Egypt.

The inscription itself was an imperial proclamation of Darius I of Persia, who employed this method of announcing his victories and achievements to all the world—a most spectacular and enduring means of publicity.

Utilizing this linguistic key, Oriental scholars now read the cuneiform inscriptions that were pressed into plastic clay three and four millenniums ago. There are vast numbers of ancient tablets to study, for with pick and spade the excavators in the Euphrates valley have unearthed libraries with thousands of tablets of various kinds.

There are histories, essays, epics, hymns, prayers, dictionaries, law works, school texts, studies in medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and music, together with countless business contracts, deeds, mortgages, and receipts. On one clay prism is a long list of ancient kings, giving the time when each reigned; the first eight of these are mentioned as kings who reigned before the Flood. On another tablet is the record of a king who sings his own praises because he “loved to read the writings of the age before the flood.”

As a result of these discoveries, new fields of study are spread out before us; nations and empires that appeared to be only phantoms are now known to have ruled extensive territories, and the details of Bible story stand forth with new and vivid interest.

It was formerly conceived that ancient peoples were of necessity crude, barbaric, and untutored; but this is now known to be altogether untrue. In numerous instances it has been demonstrated that the more ancient peoples possessed the higher culture and civilization; yes, the more remote, the more marvelous.

Long before Moses penned his inspired treatise of Genesis, Chaldean scholars inscribed on clay tablets the story of creation. Says one of these:

“I will produce a man. I will create man. He formed dust. He created mankind.”

From many similar statements it is evident that the earliest peoples of earth were not polytheists but believers in one true God, and in creation, not evolution.

Nor should we fail to mention the Sumerian Epic of Paradise, which, among other details, gives this interesting touch: “In that land there was not infirmity, no sin, and man grew not old.”

Another universal story of antiquity was that of the Flood, and in the various accounts written on clay there are many features that parallel the Scripture narrative. Among these are the following:

“Pull down thy house, build a ship, leave thy possessions, take thought for thy life. . . . Embark seed of all kinds on a ship: The ship which thou shall build, measure well its dimensions; make it correspond in breadth and length.”

“Once upon a time the deluge gathered all. The raging storm uttered its roar with terror. The storm god in the vast heavens shrieked, and there were little hailstones and great hailstones.”

Many have considered the record of the tower of Babel as only a legend, but distinguished archaeologists now admit that the Bible “narrative is correct, and confirmed by excavation.” The eminent A. H. Sayce describes a cuneiform text witnessing to the historical fact of the tower, and says.

“It tells us how certain men had ‘turned against the father of all the gods,’ and how the thoughts of their leader’s heart ‘were evil.’ At Babylon they essayed to build ‘a mound’ or hill-like tower, but the winds blew down their work, and Anu ‘confounded great and small on the mound’ as well as their ‘speech,’ and ‘made strange their counsel.’ The very word that is used in the sense of ‘confounding’ in the narrative of Genesis is used also in the Assyrian text.”

Many centuries later the great kings Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar repaired and beautified the tower. Said the latter, “To raise up the top ... that it may rival heaven, I laid to my hand.” This “brazen-doored sanctuary” was of overwhelming greatness, consisting of seven terraces or stages and crowned by a

shrine. It is said to have contained a thousand rooms, while surrounding its lofty portals was “a forest of one thousand towers.”

In old Chaldea, the lower valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, cities were usually built upon terraces of sun-dried brick. Walls and buildings were of the same material. Refuse was usually thrown out into the streets, which with the lapse of centuries became more elevated. Walls and houses crumbling with the years would be thrown down, then leveled, and the new constructed upon the ruins of the old. Some of these cities and towns were many times destroyed and depopulated by fire, flood, or war; and when at length rebuilt, the top of the mound would be smoothed off and utilized as the foundation of a new city. Thus throughout more than forty centuries the sites of those cities have become extensive mounds, the clay of the upper portions preserving the foundations of walls, temples, palaces, stone monuments, tablets, and works of art. With the modern excavator, this process is reversed. Downward, and still downward he penetrates to the fourth and fifth building periods, and even then, virgin soil may not have been reached.

Not long ago historians thought it a far cry to Ur of the Chaldees, but today that city looms before us as a famous old capital. There stands the massive tower, two hundred feet square at the base, with a hundred steps leading to the top. Constructed of sun-dried brick laid in bitumen, and erected some two centuries before the time of Abraham, this ziggurat, or tower, is today in an excellent state of preservation. In the municipal and religious center about the tower are the temple of Nannar, god of the new moon, the king’s palace, the hall of justice, and the treasury.

Doubtless Abraham, during his youth, climbed those very tower steps many times to look out over the vast plain and delta when his father and grandfather came to this treasury building to pay their taxes. One clay tablet found not far from Ur records a contract in which one named Abraham hires an ox; another in which Abraham leases a farm; and a third in which Abraham issues a receipt for the payment of rent. While this man may not be identified with the Bible patriarch, it is interesting to note that Abraham was a personal name in Chaldea at approximately the same time that the “father of the faithful” lived.

Other tablets tell of overland trips from the Euphrates valley to the Mediterranean coast; so it is evident that others beside Abraham’s household traveled abroad. We also learn that the lads who swarmed the streets of ancient Ur were not ignorant little savages, for that was a center of culture and education. At school the boys were taught language, grammar, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and all had access to the public library. The city was provided with an excellent sewerage system. The houses were mostly well-built two-story residences, similar in construction to those of modern Baghdad; while the evening twilight was gladdened with the sound of music from harps, lyres, flutes, and numerous other stringed and wind instruments.

Archaeology has indeed presented us with a new Old Testament. Its characters were living, active, enlightened men and women. In spite of the sledge-hammer blows of infidels and critics, the historicity of the Book stands not impeached, and none who have clung to its unerring message have been put to shame.

3. Daniel Liberated From the Critics’ Den

Viewing the ruins of old Babylon, Sir Austen Layard, the celebrated explorer of dead cities, wrote: “The traveler visits with no common emotion the scene of so many great and solemn events. Here Nebuchadnezzar boasted of his glories and was punished for his pride. To those deserted halls were brought the captives of Judea. In them Daniel, undazzled by the glories round him, remained steadfast to his faith, rose to be a governor amongst his rulers, and prophesied the downfall of the kingdom. There was held Belshazzar’s feast and was seen the writing on the wall. Between those crumbling mounds Cyrus entered the neglected gates. Those massive ruins cover the spot where Alexander died.”-Wonders of the Past, p. 135.

History, romance, and tradition have enshrined ancient Babylon with a picturesque and fascinating charm possessed by no other city of antiquity. Likewise the Bible story elevates Daniel the lionhearted to heights of spiritual greatness rarely attained by mortals. He is mentioned as a man of outstanding piety (Ezekiel 14:14) while Josephus states that during his later years the venerable prophet was regarded with an esteem and reverence almost akin to worship.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century numerous Biblical critics trained their heavy artillery upon the records of the past, to shatter beliefs and convictions not in accord with modern evolutionary thought. They asserted that the greatness and glories of Babylon had been grossly exaggerated. That such

names as Belshazzar and Darius the Mede were doubtless fictitious; that Daniel, if he ever existed, was not the author of the book that bears his name; and that this asserted prophetic volume must have been written at a later date, after the events predicted had taken place.

But during this age of scholarly unbelief how remarkable and providential that archaeology, “the handmaiden of history,” should arise ‘to vindicate and authenticate the Bible story! We now know that Babylon was indeed a mighty city, even when judged by modern standards; that the hanging gardens, rising terrace upon terrace, existed in all the unmatched grandeur with which legend has invested them. That its palaces were majestic, one three and a half, and the other eight miles in circumference. That its temples, mansions, and pleasure grounds were magnificent; and that this queenly metropolis was indeed a “golden city,” “the beauty of the Chaldee’s excellency.”

Regarding the book of Daniel, eminent archaeologists assert that its narrative is so vivid, minute, and real that it must have been written at the time of Babylon’s greatness, not two or three, hundred years later. The charge that it was the product of an after generation is not new. More than seventeen hundred years ago the same accusation was made by such skeptics as Philo and Porphyry; but every succeeding century has given cumulative evidence to its divine and unerring truthfulness.

To beautify proud Babylon, armies of workmen performed the seemingly incredible task of transporting huge granite and marble blocks, and giant cedars from the Mediterranean coast across seven hundred miles of desert waste. An inscription of Nebuchadnezzar reads:

“I cut a road for the cedars, I brought massive, strong cedars of wondrous beauty, whose appearance was impressive, the mighty product of the Lebanon.”

It is little wonder that the self-satisfied monarch should exclaim, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?” For in the words of the historian, “No other city built by man reached such towering heights of greatness.”

Yet, the eyes of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, surveying the unborn centuries, declared that the “golden city” would become “heaps without an inhabitant.” (Isaiah 13:19, 20; Jeremiah 51:37.) Thus it lay for many centuries, its very site almost forgotten until the German -Oriental Society began in 1899 to unearth its ancient mounds.

Figures of lions, executed in brilliantly enameled tiles, were dug from the ruins, many as bright and perfect as when they glistened on the walls of Babylon twenty-five hundred years ago. Thousands of inscriptions on brick and tile were recovered; and with one voice they concur with the Bible story that Nebuchadnezzar was a very religious man. On one of these tablets a royal prayer is preserved:

“Lord of the gods, my divine Creator, may my deeds find favor before! Thee; may they endure forever! Eternal life, satisfied with posterity, a secure throne, and a long reign grant as Thy gift. Thou art indeed my deliverer and my help.”

Many critics of the Word have ridiculed the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s madness, but the linguists have now deciphered an ancient document which mentions a time when the illustrious monarch transacted no business. It states:

“In all my dominions I did ‘not build a high place of power. In Babylon, buildings for the honor of my kingdom I did not lay out. I did not sing the praises of my Lord, I did not furnish His altars with victims, nor did I clear out the canals.”

For centuries the infidel historian pointed to Belshazzar as a nonexistent creature of fancy, but today he is known to have been a very real and actual sovereign. His name appears on commercial contracts and state documents, some of which ascribe to him royal powers and dual ruler ship with his father Nabonidus. On a prayer tablet of the latter are these words: “As for Belshazzar my firstborn son, place in his heart fear of thy great divinity; let him not turn to sinning; let him be satisfied with fullness of life.” Evidently the old king was definitely worried over his wayward son.

The records reveal that Nabonidus and his brilliant daughter Belshalti established schools and a famous museum of antiquities in Babylon. The specimens were labeled, classified, and mounted. On one clay cylinder that was already 1,700 years old in the days of Daniel, is this most intriguing label: “Copies of bricks of Ur, the work of Bur-Sin. The Priest of Ur has singled them out and copied them for men’s admiration.” He little realized how long that admiration would last! The excavators have also unearthed the royal banquet hall, its foundations 56 by 168 feet, where Belshazzar drank to “a thousand of his lords,” and where the “bloodless hand from the sleeve of darkness” traced those fateful words on the palace wall.

Yes, while old Nabonidus was “peacefully puttering over his archaeological treasures,” his profligate son ate, drank, and played. Had the talented Belshalti been ruler instead of her brother, the course of history might have been altogether different.

Archaeology has indeed provided us with a new book of Daniel. It is no longer in the critics' den. Its characters appear as very real men. Its historicity is fully established; while its critics are stunned and speechless.

Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel, commended the hero of Babylon as a man of unimpeachable character. The angel Gabriel eulogized him as a "man greatly beloved"; while Christ voiced approval of the study of the book of Daniel, saying, "Who reads, let him understand." One young man who listened treasured those words; and in later years when he penned the book of Revelation, used more than forty direct and indirect quotations from Daniel.

We, too, should be inspired to peruse and explore the book of Daniel diligently, for it contains a vital message for the men and women of this modern age.

4. With Pick and Spade In Palestine and Syria

"The dust of ages is a great historian."

Who would have dreamed that from the "howling wilderness" of Sinai evidence would arise revealing that in the days of Moses temple priests employed an alphabet in writing their books? Yes, and some of those manuscripts are marvelously preserved to the present day.

To the northeast, across forty leagues of desert sand, are the ruins of Ezion Geber. By pick and shovel that industrial city, the Pittsburgh of Palestine, has emerged in its grave clothes. Excavators find that it was constructed by a carefully developed plan, the product of engineering genius.

This smelting center, with its giant air-conditioned blast furnaces, was three thousand years ahead of its time. As an industrial seaport it was undoubtedly the source of Solomon's splendor, for it reveals him to have been a copper king, a shipping magnate, a merchant prince, and a building pioneer.

A hundred and twenty-five miles to the north the traveler reaches, the site of old Sodom and Gomorrah, once set like jewels in that ancient "garden of the Lord." Like the account of Jonah and the whale, the Bible story of their destruction has been the topic of much atheistic ridicule. But today on the southwest shore of the Dead Sea geologists find the salt, sulfur, and asphalt scattered about, testifying to the mighty upheaval that overthrew the cities of the plain and left the ruins as a lurid warning against unbelief and riotous living.

Near the northern end of the Dead Sea are the excavations of old Jericho. Archaeologists testify that the ponderous city walls were thrown outward as by a great earthquake, precisely in accord with the Scripture narrative. While within the houses of the ancient city are found charred pieces of unbaked dough, wheat, barley, lentils, onions, and dates—all indicating the sudden catastrophe that overwhelmed and burned the city.

From the royal tombs outside the walls large quantities of Egyptian vases, pottery, and other relics bearing the date of the ruling monarch, have been uncovered. The inscriptions also mention the Israelites, and indicate the approximate time of their entrance into Palestine, which coincides with the Bible chronology and places the destruction of Jericho about the year 1411 BC.

The Hittites are frequently mentioned in Bible story; yet for centuries critics ridiculed the name as highly fictitious. But what a surprise was theirs when excavators produced countless trophies and volumes of evidence from this extensive, yet long-forgotten empire!

Next to the Babylonians and Egyptians, the Hittites were unquestionably the most distinguished people of antiquity. One of their famous old capitals was at Boghaz Keui in Asia Minor, another at Carchemish on the Euphrates.

The drawings, monuments, and ruins now definitely identified as belonging to this people, are scattered over an extensive area from the shores of the Mediterranean and Aegean to far beyond the Euphrates. The names, warlike activities, and building accomplishments of a number of their monarchs are now well known.

From the ruins of a Hittite school it is found that within its walls at least six languages were taught, and from the dust heap of an old temple at Ras Shamra (a town on the Syrian coast opposite Cyprus) many religious ceremonial tablets have been uncovered. These are from the fourteenth century before Christ, and contain numerous technical terms familiar to every Bible student, such as:

"The court yard of the tent." (See Exodus 27:9.)

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- “The holy place of the holy places.” (Exodus 26:33.)
- “The table of gold in the sanctuary.” (Exodus 25: 23, 24.)
- “The ark of the covenant.” (Numbers 10:33.)
- “The trespass offering.” (Leviticus 5:1S.)
- “The peace offering.” (Leviticus 22:21.)
- “The tribute offering.” (Numbers 31:28.)
- “The wave offering.” (Leviticus 7:30.)
- “The first fruits.” (Exodus 23:19.)
- “Bread of the Gods.” (Leviticus 21:6, 8.)
- “The burnt offering.” (Leviticus 4:12.)
- “Whole burnt offering.” (Leviticus 6:1S.)
- “The new moon offering.” (Numbers 28:11.)

Throughout Palestine and Syria are thousands of ancient mounds as yet hardly touched by the excavator; but from the little already accomplished, bright beams of light illumine the sacred pages of the Old Testament. The buildings, fortifications, and watercourses constructed by the once powerful Amorites now stand forth as monuments of wonder to that almost forgotten people. We now recognize the warlike Philistines as the sea rovers, or Vikings of that ancient time, and find them evidently emerging from Crete and other near-by lands to harass the Egyptians as well as the Israelites.

The famous Moabite Stone inscribed by Meshah, the sheep-raising king of Moab as mentioned in the Bible, gives interesting confirmatory history of that people and their wars and dealings with Israel. Formerly the mention of Ahab's "ivory house" (1 Kings 22:39) sounded to many like a fairy tale, but in the ruins of ancient Samaria archaeologists are now confident that they have found this magnificent old palace. Inscriptions further show that from the mountains of Lebanon both Egyptian and Babylonian monarchs, as well as others, secured cedar wood and stones for temples and palaces in their respective lands. And what a thrill as the excavators have explored the extensive rock-hewn stables of Solomon at Megiddo!

Likewise countless cities and many kings mentioned in the Bible narrative—names like Jeroboam and Omri of Israel, Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah, Shishak and Necho of Egypt, Sargon and Sennacherib of Assyria, Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar of Babylon, and Cyrus and Darius of Persia—are immortalized in the records found on tablets of clay and monuments of stone.

During more than a century archaeological research has produced tens of thousands of inscriptions and has vastly increased our knowledge of past ages; yet in all this elaborate array, not one established fact has arisen to shake or disprove the historicity and authenticity of the Word of God.

What a marvelous providence is this! At the very time when evolution, higher criticism, and modernism would lead the world to repudiate the Bible, reject the Creator, and deny the divine Christ, the discoveries in those ancient lands have affirmed and reaffirmed the absolute trustworthiness of Holy Writ. Archaeology has moved forward by a direct course in full harmony and accord with the Scripture narrative, while the objections and theories of critics have tumbled like a house of cards.

“The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures for ever.”

5. Bible From Crocodiles

Until near the close of the nineteenth century, no modern scholar had ever seen an autograph manuscript written in the language of the common people in the time of Christ; and no one dreamed of the vast hoards of literary treasure reserved for this modern age of surprises.

In the year 1897 two young men, Professors B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, while exploring in the Nile valley south of Cairo, Egypt, discovered tons of Greek and Coptic manuscript, some of which was written in the language of the New Testament. Two years later, in a near-by locality, the same excavators uncovered a cemetery of mummified sacred crocodiles.

As an old tomb was about to be opened, hopes were high of, perchance, looking upon a jeweled princess, but what was the disappointment in finding only a huge crocodile. In his disgust a workman picked up the mummy and hurled it against a rock, breaking it in pieces; when, wow! It was found to be stuffed with old manuscript. Immediately the value of these despised creatures increased in price; and from them was obtained fragments of ancient classics, royal decrees, petitions, land surveys, contracts, accounts,

private letters, and portions of Scripture, much of which is perfectly preserved.

Aside from stone, clay, and metal, the people of antiquity used three materials upon which to record their thoughts. The finest workmanship of the scribe for royal courts, temples, and large churches was wrought in silver and gold upon purple vellum (calfskin), which to this day stands unrivaled. For other choice documents and scrolls, parchment (sheepskin and goatskin) was utilized; and for all ordinary commercial and literary purposes the tough but inexpensive papyrus (plural, papyri) served during a period of more than three thousand years as the universal writing paper.

The reed known as papyrus, from which our word paper is derived, grew in great abundance throughout Lower Egypt. In the providing of ancient peoples with an almost imperishable writing paper, we observe another marvelous providence of our God. He then embalmed the manuscript in the arid, rainless, frostless, desert sands, to be unearthed in our day, to confound Biblical critics, and to establish the integrity of the grand old Book.

Here is another remarkable feature. Seven hundred years before Christ, and while Egypt was still a mighty nation, God foretold its complete overthrow, and also declared, “The paper reeds by the brooks ... shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.” Isaiah 19:7. Centuries passed; the plant continued to flourish as of old; and the infidel ridiculed the prediction as an idle dream; but today the growing reed has entirely disappeared from the delta of the Nile. In fulfilled prophecy, as well as in the vast treasures of old papyri, the voice of God clearly testifies to the wisdom of the Omniscent.

Previous to the recent discoveries linguists and scholars were unable to account for the difference between classic and New Testament Greek. But by comparison with the papyri it was seen that the Gospels were written in the dialect of the middle classes, the language of the home, the shop, and the market place. As Dr. Camden M. Cobern asserts: “Wycliffe only did for England what Matthew and Mark did for the Roman world. Christianity from the beginning spoke the tongue of the peasant”; and in that widely used vernacular the New Testament was written.

The scribes and Pharisees of that day conducted the religious ritual in a dead language, the classic Hebrew, which only the educated Jew understood. But by a study of the manuscripts it is now seen that Christ and His apostles used, not the original Hebrew Bible, but a translation of that into Greek, known as the Septuagint. To the orthodox Jew, this was heresy, but Christ “taught not as the scribes,” and “the common people heard Him gladly.”

“The vocabulary of the New Testament,” says the learned Dr. F. W. Robertson, “is practically the same as that of the vernacular in the Roman Empire in the first century after Christ.” Likewise the eminent Dr. Cobern declares: “The language of the New Testament, like that of the papyri, is the language of life and not of books; it is the language of nature, not of the schools. The New Testament does not contain the vulgarities common to the papyri, but lifts this spoken language to a new dignity. The New Testament is as different from the papyri in its charm and spiritual elevation, as from the ancient classics. It used the common language of its day-but it glorified and spiritualized it.”

Christianity’s original “Psalm Book,” edited by believers about AD 100, is a collection of unusual interest. From the same era comes a clear, forceful confession of Christian faith, a scholarly “Harmony of the Gospels,” and an apparently genuine compilation of the “Sayings of Jesus” not found in the New Testament. But can you imagine the sensation caused by the discovery of a leaf from the pocket Bible of a Christian who lived but little more than a century after Christ!

Most unique and quite pathetic is a collection of Bible texts written on pieces of broken pottery, evidently made by some poor Christians who could afford nothing better. Twenty pieces, each serially numbered, have been found; yet it appears that the original included much or all of the New Testament.

To tell of all these interesting discoveries would require volumes. Of supreme import, however, is the recovering of thousands of Bible manuscripts from sandy wastes and mountainsides, from obscure retreats and once popular centers, from cathedral ruins and convent cells, written on all kinds of materials in Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Latin, Ethiopic, Arabic, and numerous other languages, some by skilled scribes, others by the crude hand of the peasant, rich men’s Bibles, poor men’s Bibles, church Bibles, family Bibles, prepared in the early morn of Christianity and coming down to us by hundreds of different routes, yet all telling the same wonderful story of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior.

By thousands of divine providence God has preserved and verified His Word. The text of Scripture is the same that came from the hands of the prophets and apostles. There has been no “brilliant patchwork” by penmen of a later generation. Aside from slight verbal differences, it has spoken the same in every era, even as it does in every language. Nothing has been taken out of it.

The most scholarly arguments ever launched against the Book are now completely demolished; for

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the Bible is an anvil that has worn out many hammers. The hammers are gone. The anvil is still unimpaired. “The Lord in Zion reigns.” “All Scripture is God-breathed.”

“When I am tired, the Bible is my bed;
Or in the dark, the Bible is my light;
When I am hungry, it is vital bread;
Or fearful, it is armor for the fight.

“Does gloom oppress? The Bible is a sun.
Or ugliness? It is a garden fair.
Am I athirst? How cool its currents run
Or stifled? What a vivifying air!
Since thus thou gives of thyself to me,
How should I give Myself, great Book, to thee!”

AMOS R. WELLS.

6. The Living Word

“Most wondrous Book! bright candle of the Lord! Star of eternity! the only star By which the bark of man could navigate The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss.” ROBERT POLLOK.

“The Bible is like an ever-flowing fountain. Take what we will, and as much as we will, we ever leave more than we take to satisfy the wants of others. Neither the writers nor the thinkers of any one age can exhaust its fullness. The books of men have their day, and then grow obsolete. God’s Word is like Himself, ‘The same yesterday, today, and for ever.’ Time passes over it, but it ages not. Its power is as fresh as if God spoke it but yesterday.” -DR. PAYNE SMITH.

While the Book is old, its natural strength is not abated, and it is still living and life giving. Its garments may wear out, but its youth abides. Its instruction is ever abreast of the times, and its message anticipates every need of mankind. Nor is this all; the wonderful lamp of Scripture penetrates the fog and mist of the present to illuminate the otherwise uncertain future.

For nearly six thousand years that light has been shining, and the accurate fulfillment of prophecy along the centuries gives faith and confidence for the untrodden path of tomorrow.

“History,” declared James A. Garfield, “is but the unrolled scroll of prophecy.” And H. L. Hastings, that vigorous champion of the Inspired Word, testifies:

“So long as Babylon is in heaps; so long as Nineveh lies empty, void and waste; so long as Egypt is the basest of kingdoms; so long as Tyre is a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea. So long as Israel is scattered among all nations. So long as Jerusalem is trodden underfoot of the Gentiles. So long as the great empires of the world march on in their predicted courses, so long we have proof that one Omniscient Mind dictated the predictions of that Book, and that ‘prophecy came not in old time by the will of man.’” - Will the Old Book Stand? p. 20.

Consider also the precise fulfillment of numerous other Scriptural forecasts regarding cities, nations, and individuals, of prophecies outlining the vicissitudes of the Hebrew race, of those presented in the visions of Daniel and the Revelation, and of the hundreds of prophecies converging in the birth, activities, death, and resurrection of Christ. How can any normal, reasonable mind fail to accept such a volume of accumulated evidence?

Saul of Tarsus was chosen by the Jewish leaders as the inflexible opponent and saboteur of the infant church; but as his keen mind carefully studied and compared the predictions of Old Testament prophets with their marvelous analogy in the life of Jesus, he surrendered to the overwhelming conviction of truth, and became the intrepid apostle of the Lord Jesus.

In the days of John Wesley two noted agnostics of England, Lord Lyttelton and Dr. Gilbert West, met frequently in the palace of Lord Cobliam, where distinguished poets and men of letters were entertained with lavish hospitality. Convinced that the resurrection of Christ and the conversion of Paul were the two principal bulwarks of the Christian religion, Dr. West, a recognized scholar of Oxford, agreed

to publish an attack upon the alleged resurrection of our Lord, and Lord Lyttelton consented to prepare a book showing that the supposed conversion of Paul was but a myth.

The sequel reveals that fact is often times stranger than fiction. Both skeptics investigated; both were converted; and both published the electrifying results of their findings. Dr. West's monumental work of over four hundred pages bears the title *Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, while Lord Lyttelton's admirable treatise *The Conversion of St. Paul* passed through nine editions and exerted a powerful influence in rekindling religious faith among the higher classes. At that time, we are told, the experiences of these men created "a great sensation" in England. (See *Chronicles of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 1, pp. 212-214.)

The Bible is like a river of living water from the throne of God that brings beauty and fertility wherever it flows. It enriches the lives of old and young, rich and poor, statesman and peasant. The barren places of earth are transformed into a fair garden of the Lord. As the Word has promised, "Every thing shall live whither the river comes." Ezekiel 47:9.

At one time in early life that prince of religious journalists, Arthur T. Pierson, found himself slipping into "the deep darkness of doubt." Then, beginning at the foundations, he searched until he found abundant evidence that "the Bible is the Book of God, and Christ the Son of God." He adds, "It was like finding one's way out of a dense wood into the full light of day," His life was enriched, and God mightily used him to bless the lives of thousands.

Space fails us to tell of the miraculous transformations wrought by the Word in the lives of such men as John Bunyan, George Muller, William Miller, Dr. Howard Kelly, and a multitude of others. They drank of the living water and became new men.

Chief Shalumbo was a despotic slave trader of Africa, who maintained iron discipline by mutilating the faces and cutting off the ears of his victims. But the river of life flowed past his darkened village. Long and desperately he resisted, but finally surrendered, and was transformed into a devout, loving Christian and winner of souls.

A Chinese bandit chieftain while living incognito in the city of Peking, China, strolled into a gospel tent and listened to the message of the Book. It came like a refreshing draught of the living water. But he went away and was quite forgotten. Years later, as the former Peking evangelist was visiting a church in Central China, a man asked the missionary whether he remembered him. The evangelist did not; whereupon the man spoke softly, "I was that bandit chieftain you met in Peking."

"And what are you doing now?" inquired the missionary.

"Oh," came the response, "I'm the treasurer of this church."

When the living waters were first offered to the peoples of the South Seas, there was violent opposition; but when the natives actually tasted of the bread and water of life, cannibals and headhunters were transformed into honest, peace-loving citizens and witnesses for the Master. While this work was in progress, World War II burst upon the nations, and vast numbers of servicemen were dispatched to the island groups of the Pacific.

Then what amazing discoveries! One lad wrote: "Dear Mom: Because of missions, I was feasted, and not feasted upon, when I fell from the sky into this village."

From other V-mail there came a remarkable chorus of surprise and approval, as the following will indicate:

"The contrast between the pagan village and, the Christian village is almost indescribable."

"In all fairness I must say the missionaries have done absolutely marvelous work."

"If people could only see, they would understand."

"I have written from a khaki-colored viewpoint. To see these things is a great revelation that none of us will ever forget."

"The best cure I can think of for atheism would be a few days spent with the missionaries here."

An Australian who remained in New Guinea during those tragic months, declared that many "soldiers who perhaps never had seen the likeness of Christ in their own home life, have seen Him in the faces and lives of those brown fuzzy-wuzzy angels."

An American officer also reported to U.S. Senator James M. Mead that the natives held this remarkable attitude "because they had been given Lotu (The Word) by Seventh-day Adventist" and other missionaries.

Friends, such miracles of changed lives cannot be explained away. No other book in all the world produces like results. "All Scripture is God-breathed." His inspired penmen wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Other valued classics have wholly disappeared from the earth; but in a thousand ways the hand of God has preserved large numbers of ancient Bible manuscripts. Along the centuries it has been the most loved and the most hated of books. But through all the vicissitudes of war and persecution it comes to us complete and unimpaired, “The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: but the word of the Lord endures for ever.” 1 Peter 1:23, 24.

We live in an era of scientific advancement; yet material progress is insufficient, for what shall it profit a man if he acquire the telescope and television, yet lose his physical or spiritual eyesight? Let us take no chances. In deed and truth we would be “people of the Book,” for this treasure, with its living message, leaves no worthy desire unsatisfied.

“The Bible is the most wonderful of all histories. It reveals the glory of God in the working of His providence to save a fallen world. It presents in simplest language the mighty power of the gospel, which, when received, cuts the chains that bind men to Satan’s chariot.” -Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 377.

7. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

Breath-taking events of the first magnitude crowd one upon another with precipitate haste, and on every hand men and women talk of “the new world of tomorrow.”

What a distance the world has traveled in the past half century! Men and women but little past the meridian of life have witnessed the most amazing changes. They have seen the birth of the motor age, the air age, the radio age, and are now on the threshold of an electronic age, a television age, and an atomic age.

Born in the blithe and happy days of the horse and buggy, the writer saw the advent of rubber tires, watched the bicycle and the telephone emerge to popularity, felt the tingle of boyish excitement when the first electric light was installed in his home town, and in the little white schoolhouse on the corner made his “first public appearance” by giving a recitation entitled “Our American Inventors.” Its closing lines were something like this:

“In 1878 Thomas Edison invented the electric light;
The phonograph came also from this man of mind and might.
And now the world is waiting to see what next we’ll do;
I hope the next inventor will be some one of you!”

Since those days a million and a half patents have been issued by the Government office at Washington. In the home, vacuum cleaners have largely replaced the broom; numerous other electrical servants relieve the drudgery of housework; and the dreamland kitchen of tomorrow will provide magic appliances and conveniences of which the cooks of yesterday and today have never dreamed.

Instead of the former crude instruments of farming, consider the modern tools of agriculture that enable two or three men to do the work of a hundred. The new science of the soil and the rotation of crops bring), luxuriant harvests; the airplane is utilized to sow grain, spray fields and orchards, and run errands for the rancher.

From the old stage coach, called the “flying machine,” that made the trip between New York and Philadelphia in two days, to the comfortable streamliner that now covers an equal distance in an hour, is a far cry. But when the railway train, sweeping along at one hundred or one hundred and twenty-five miles per hour, is too slow! There is the airplane that will soon be making transcontinental trips on a regular schedule in about six hours.

The world now boasts of 15,000 airports, and many more are being built. Luxury liners are also being projected with elaborate accommodations, and, capable of carrying seventy-five to one hundred passengers. They will fly at an altitude of 30,000 feet, the cabins will be “pressurized” for normal breathing, and the planes will carry you to any place on the globe in from thirty to thirty-five hours. At present fifty-five hours are required.

Within the next few years it is expected that nearly half a million private planes will be in operation, that first-class mail will be largely carried by air, and that aerial rockets may be constructed that will transport important mail across the Atlantic in about forty minutes.

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On the wings of radio our words may now be broadcast to every spot on the earth's surface. Television is also on the way; and sooner or later television receiving sets may be as common in the home as the radio. People of California will be privileged to watch a Presidential inauguration at the nation's capital. New Englanders will view with delight a sunset at the Golden Gate. And the "commercials" will permit women to do their own downtown window shopping while seated at the breakfast table.

We are told that radar won the war, that it enabled airmen to plunge through fog and darkness for pin-point bombing, that it warned of enemy approach whether by air or water, and that it was the major defense weapon against the rocket bombing of England. In the wider and fast developing field of electronics new products, gadgets, and industries will play a large role in the amazing tomorrow.

Manufacturers promise the men folks new trousers with a permanent crease, while the women will be supplied with stockings that will not "run." Amateur photographers will be provided with cameras the size of a walnut to be worn on the forehead, and radio lovers will be given a midget receiving set weighing but twenty ounces, that may be carried in pocket or handbag. While riding a tractor, a horse, or strolling through the park, you may listen to your favorite broadcast.

Nor should we omit the wartime achievements in medicine and surgery. The sulfa drugs, penicillin, and plasmas have saved multitudes from untimely death; the new technique in treating wounds and fractures, and checking epidemics by insecticides, has been a wonderful contribution to both military and civilian life.

Most spectacular of all is the atomic bomb. Some scientists assert that they have tapped the power that runs the universe. In one fatal night an apparently friendly power could blast the cities and resources of another nation out of existence. Another announcement states that a satisfactory defense has also been devised. But who knows? Will this titanic power be utilized to transform our world into a Utopia, or into a "bottomless pit"?

Concerning this age of phenomenal achievement, there are two factors that are highly significant. From the dawn of history the inventive genius of man appeared to lie dormant until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; then suddenly it burst into activity, and with incredible swiftness the methods of industry, thought, travel, and communication were completely revolutionized.

The other miracle feature in this modern pageant of progress is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. The forecast was given to the prophet-statesman of ancient Babylon by an angel messenger. He said:

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Daniel 12:4.

God's television camera penetrated unborn centuries and millenniums to focus itself upon our day and photograph for the prophet Daniel a panorama of this modern world. That preview of the increase of knowledge was given twenty-five hundred years ago, and what an accurate blueprint of the march of events now in progress! In every field of endeavor the mind and heart of man have been divinely inspired to discover, invent, achieve, and to inaugurate greater changes in the realm of science, industry, and the fine art of living than have occurred throughout all past ages.

And what vast multitudes "run to and fro" about the earth! They run by auto, by railway train, by steam and motor ships, and by the swift planes that cleave the sky. No previous age has produced a parallel. The Q(moving picture) of earth's millions is unprecedented!

Likewise the prophecies of the Great Book are unsealed. They crystallize into history. Like neon lights they illuminate this twentieth-century speedway and reveal that these eventful days constitute the era specifically designated by Daniel as "the time of the end."

Now comes the crowning discovery of all time, that hastened Allied victory in the Far East. It not only shocked a battered, bleeding empire into sudden capitulation; it came like an earthquake to the consciousness of all mankind. Especially should it shake the Christian out of his complacency and lead him to diligently search his Bible and loyally witness for his Lord.

To each of us it should bring a vivid sense of our dependence upon God. Even irreligious newsmen are frequently using such terms as "the crisis of civilization" and "the end of the world." And, friends, our heavenly Father is planning for His children something infinitely superior to the most utopian dreams of scientists and inventors.

The grand climax of history is just before us. The second appearing of Christ will not long be delayed, and in this momentous "time of the end," let us make full heart preparation for an abiding home in God's new world of tomorrow

8. The Extinction of War

The universal longings of the human heart are reflected in these lines of Thomas Curtis Clark: “Let there be no more war; Time calls at last to peace. Of swords and guns We have no need. Beneath high suns We plant the seed Of friendship. Let the world Forsake the mad god Thor. Let battles cease, With pure white flags unfurled.”

On that memorable day in Tokyo Harbor when Japanese representatives signed the terms of unconditional surrender, General Douglas MacArthur delivered an address of far-reaching statesmanship and moving eloquence. We would ponder well the profound significance of his words:

“A new era is upon us. The destructiveness of the war potential, through progressive advances in scientific discovery, has in fact now reached a point which revises the traditional concept of war. Men since the beginning of time have sought peace. Military alliance, balance of power, League of Nations—all in turn have failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we do not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door.”

Several weeks before the dramatic moment when the world was ushered into the atomic age, Anthony Eden stood before the delegates of fifty peace-loving nations at San Francisco to declare, “This may be the world’s last chance to create an effective peace organization combining responsibility with power.” Evidently civilization could never survive a third world war; accordingly it is for us to determine, as Abraham Lincoln once stated in another solemn crisis, whether “we shall nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth.”

Throughout all its previous one hundred and fifty one years’ history, the United States of America expended for all defense and war purposes the sum of sixty-four billion dollars; while to meet the emergency of World War II our Government appropriated about four hundred billions. The expenditure and losses incurred by all the belligerents in this conflict may reach the incomprehensible sum of two trillion, or two thousand billion. Also during these hectic years our Navy was built up to a two ocean armada of nearly 100,000 ships, large and small, a fleet larger than the combined navies of the rest of the world.

From 1940 to 1945 our country constructed some 250,000 airplanes; the Army alone procured 1,116,000 pieces of artillery, 119,400 tanks and armored cars, 2,400,000 trucks, 1,700,000 radio sets, 2,660,000 telephones, 29,000,000 tents, 117,000,000 pairs of shoes, and 7,000 locomotives.

Eleven million American citizens were marshaled for the defense of liberty, and an approximately equal number in our ammunition plants were forging the tools and sinews of war. Out of nearly 1,100,000 casualties suffered by U.S. forces, some 300,000 of our men made the supreme sacrifice.

To us this is altogether tragic. But when we consider the vast sweep of armies and navies over a large portion of the globe, the destruction rained from the skies, the countless multitudes driven from their homes in three continents, it may be that the direct and indirect toll of human life will reach the staggering total of fifty millions. And all because of senseless and inordinate ambition to rule and enslave!

The depths of infamy to which human beings may sink is disclosed by the horror prison camps of Central Europe and the Far East. And what a perversion of all true values when in the hours of desperate extremity Adolph Hitler vowed to reduce European life to “ruin, rats, and epidemics!”

To be sure, the soldiers expect peril and hardship; but during this conflict countless millions of innocent men, women, and children have lived under the reign of cold, hunger, chaos, injustice, insecurity, brutality, and barbarism. No wonder that World War II has been termed “the ugliest in human history.”

But what of the future? A prominent Roman Catholic statesman of Central Europe believes that in his continent, as well as in Asia, the people “face a period of armed revolutions.” From another viewpoint Major J. F. Fuller of the British Army speaks of the present international police power of the Allies, and remarks: “I am of the opinion that it will not last long, because, since human nature is as it is, the policemen will ultimately quarrel, and the whole system will tumble down.”

We are also perplexed regarding the secret of the atomic bomb. Shall we attempt to keep it for ourselves, or shall we place the formula in the hands of the United Nations Security Council? Again, some scientists predict that the next great development may bring the splitting of the hydrogen atom. Should that be accomplished, the fear is expressed that the incendiary elements of the whole planet might explode, and the entire world be turned “into a near-perpetual ball of fire.”

Today, while humanity stumbles along the brink of weal or woe, there should be a mighty upsurge of publishing and proclaiming the everlasting gospel, which alone can save from sin and destruction. A

great national magazine issues the call for a voice that men cannot disbelieve -a clear, fresh, brave, wise voice-and adds, "Despairing men are listening for that voice."

Friends, the Book of divine inspiration presents just such a voice. Its prophecies speak to the men and women of this twentieth century. They foretell the extensive peace efforts on the one hand, and the furious madness of the nations on the other that, characterize this age.

Twenty-seven centuries ago prophets of God revealed that "in the last days" "many people" would unite in a vast crusade for peace, proposing that swords be beaten into plowshares, that spears be turned into pruning hooks, and that the nations should no longer "learn war" or "lift up sword against nation." Isaiah 2:2-4.

In fulfillment, consider the peace palaces, treaties, pacts, covenants, the League of Nations, the World Court, and now the United Nations Security Council. To these commitments and projects for global security some of the world's greatest and wisest statesmen have contributed their best efforts. Behold also the mighty pageant of armaments that God declared would be marshaled throughout the world just prior to the second coming of Christ:

"Proclaim you this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Let the heathen be wakened. Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." Joel 3:9-14.

This graphic forecast with its picture of the "sickle," the "harvest," the "day of the Lord," points unerringly to the time of fulfillment just before the close of earth's history. So today while international leaders and diplomats labor untiringly for world progress and tranquillity, the fear of racial hatreds, sudden upheaval, or surprise attack requires the maintenance of such giant war machines by peace-loving nations as no other age has witnessed.

The paradox of war and peace as forecast in Bible prophecy is also the paradox of this twentieth century. Both features of these seemingly contradictory predictions are accurately fulfilled in the contradictory developments of our day; for we have witnessed the greatest peace efforts of all history, and the greatest wars of all time.

John the revelator, also looking down the centuries to this same thrilling hour, wrote: "The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou should give reward to Thy servants the prophets." Revelation 11:18.

Do we perceive the full significance of this statement? Just prior to the great judgment day and the final presentation of awards, the prophet beheld the furious anger of the nations. But, thank God, He who comes to recompense "every man according to his works" will also "destroy them which destroy the earth."

Yes, the true Christian is assured that the age long tragedy of sin and heartaches is almost over; and that soon the Prince of Peace is to establish His reign of peace and good will among men. Are we not eager to live in that better country where the storm clouds of war no longer darken the sky, where hatreds and jealousies are forever excluded and forgotten, and where love, happiness, and prosperity reign in all their natural beauty and enduring charm? Shall we not let His wonderful peace so fill our lives today that we shall be welcomed citizens to His homeland of tomorrow?

9. A Flood of Lawlessness

On a certain battlefield a young man was detailed to guard an important prisoner; but when called upon to deliver his charge, the poor man could only say, "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." 1 Kings 20:40.

During recent years one or both parents have frequently been pressed into essential war or civilian service. The majority of Americans have been absorbed in the greatest conflict of history; so the above confession may be paraphrased:

As we parents, teachers, and citizens were busy here and there, many of the children were gone.

During these years hundreds of thousands of American boys and girls have deserted their homes, many of them never to return. Vast numbers of others have run wild in the streets and alleys, and during last year committed some 300,000 major crimes. One district attorney in a large city declares that "juvenile delinquents have risen 20 to 1 compared with three years ago." In the State of California the number of

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teen-age arrests has amounted to about 100,000 a year.

J. Edgar Hoover, of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, believes that the record of major crimes for 1945 will exceed 1,400,000. He states that the FBI file of criminal records has soared to 6,000,000, and that one out of every twenty-two persons in the nation has been fingerprinted in connection with some vicious act of lawlessness.

He further informs us that 22 per cent of the criminals taken into custody by the Federal Bureau were youth under twenty-one. Of them Mr. Hoover said, "For the first time these young toughies seemed utterly indifferent to punishment." In these juvenile delinquents he senses the postwar peril of a vastly increased criminal army.

Also with eleven million returning servicemen, many of them hardened by the atrocities of the battlefield and the prison camp, we definitely face a harvest of laxity and "wild oats." Says Harry Emerson Fosdick:

"Every modern war of which we have the record has had that aftermath. When the storm is over, the mass of men do not go on rising to great heights. They let go, relax, slump. Certainly that happened after the last war. The religious and moral life of our nation and of the world does face hard days ahead. We can't do what we are doing now without a moral and spiritual slump in consequence."?

Of the dangerous trends in American social and religious life, J. E. Nonant, a columnist in the *Watchman Examiner*, paints this graphic yet lurid picture:

"If ever moral and spiritual conditions were appalling, they are certainly that today. If there was ever an appeal for the church of Christ to be aflame with the evangelistic message and ministry, we are in the midst of such a heart-cry at this hour.

"When eight times more hours are spent at the movies than in Sunday school, with only one out of every twelve in America attending church, and seven of every eight children quitting church and Sunday school before they are fifteen. When fifteen million sex magazines are read every month by one third of the people of this nation. When there are more barmaids than college girls and three times as many criminals as college students. When one million young women are infected with social disease, one hundred thousand girls a year disappear into white slavery, one million babes a year are born out of wedlock, and more are done to death before they are born. When sixty suicides occur every day, a murder every forty minutes, and a major crime every twenty-two seconds. When two of every three adults, men and women, smoke, some women taking to pipes; with women drinkers increasing with sickening rapidity, while \$750 goes for sinful pleasures and amusements for every dollar for foreign missions -we know that if the church of Christ does not wake up and become once more the salt that has not lost its power to stay the advance of corruption, this nation will all too soon become a wreck upon the pitiless shore of spiritual bankruptcy and moral degeneracy."

Another grave menace is the mounting total of broken homes. Even in prewar days there were some communities in which divorce threatened to outnumber the wedding bells. At present it is freely predicted by judges and sociologists that all records will be shattered by the teeming throngs crashing the divorce courts.

Under the excitement of wartime there have been many thousands of hasty marriages. Also during the months and years of enforced separation, love often times wanes, and large numbers will doubtless be unable to stand the strain and stress of the less colorful postwar family life. And remember: a large percentage of juvenile delinquency and crime emerges from divided homes.

Other reasons why the youth have been stung with "the cobra of intemperance and the scorpion of criminality," should be seriously considered. On the newsstands behold the flood of vicious literature. Government agencies frequently confiscate tons of magazines too vile for circulation. Unfortunately, there remains much that is saturated with profanity, impurity, lawbreaking glorified into heroism, and exciting stories that poison the minds of old and young.

Screen pictures, a marvelous invention, constitute one of the world's most effective educational agencies. How tragic that this great gift to humanity should too often be degraded to portray illicit love, criminal adventure, drunkenness, and murder. What is more, 77,000,000 of our fellow countrymen view these films each week, one third of them being under twenty years of age. Is it any wonder that the youth dream of wild orgies by night, then go out to enact some of the atrocities in real life.

The public dance hall and the bar, with its promiscuous crowd of drinking men and women, are also fruitful sources of misconduct. In spite of the war effort Californians drank a record total of 18,600,000 gallons of hard liquor in 1944, which would mean an average of nearly 400 highballs per capita; while during the same period America expended \$7,100,000,000 for alcoholic beverages, an amount equal to \$54

a person. Considering the priorities given to intoxicating drinks, one would suppose that liquor were absolutely essential to the war effort.

Nor should we omit the cigarette. We are appalled to learn that Americans smoke nearly a billion a day, and that the number is increasing at the rate of 25 per cent annually. During the war years one fourth of these 44coffin nails” were sent to our armed forces, enough to supply every man and woman in uniform with fifty cigarettes a day for every day of the year. With their benumbing, deadening, unnerving influence, it is a wonder that the war was ever won.

During World War 1, David Lloyd George declared, “We are fighting Germany, Austria, and Drink. Drink [and he might have included the cigarette] is doing us more damage in war than all the German submarines put together.”

Athletes training for contests of skill and endurance are not permitted to barter away their strength by the use of stimulants and narcotics. These monstrous evils are destroying the flower of American manhood and womanhood; and why, oh, why, do our government lawmakers and officials permit them to continue their death march? Of such a time as this the gospel prophet wrote:

“The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” Isaiah 24:5.

Observe also the voice of prophecy speaking to our day to delineate world conditions as they now exist:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despising of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” 2 Timothy 3: 1-5.

These words were entered upon the prophetic scroll nineteen centuries ago; yet what language could more vividly picture the wickedness, immorality, and racketeering of this present modern age? The times are unprecedented. The index finger of divine prophecy points unmistakably to this lawless generation.

Yet, beyond the dark deeds of the present evil world is the undefiled homeland of the redeemed. There, no blasted romances or broken hearthstones, no wanton pleasures or mad revelry, will invade or menace the happy estate. There will be no bandits or racketeers, no penitentiaries or poorhouses, no drunkards or dope addicts, no suicides or murders, and the inhabitants will be forever free from the menace of a plotting underworld.

Nineteen centuries ago Jesus of Nazareth gave to humanity a living demonstration that regardless of environment or circumstances there is divine enabling power to lift the fallen, to cleanse the darkest stain, and to prepare men and women for citizenship in the congenial society of a crime-free universe.

Friend, whoever you are, and whatever may have been your past life, Christ extends to you the cordial, affectionate, invitation, “Come.”

10. Youth, the College, and the Church

As millions of servicemen and servicewomen return to civilian life, and large numbers enter college or technical school to pursue or complete a course of study, how vitally essential that they, together with millions of other youth, consider the selection of an educational institution where God’s name is revered and His Word honored.

The copy of a letter from a young student at a theological seminary, written to a pastor friend, lies before me. He came from a Christian home, and at the time of entering school possessed unshaken faith in the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

After a few weeks he found himself “slipping into modernism and socialism without realizing it.” His condition of mind was confused and hard to explain. Other young men were having a similar experience, until, as he states, “all our fundamentals had been uprooted.” The letter continues:

“I finally decided that if modernism was all I had to believe in, I might as well throw everything overboard and not believe in anything. Actually, for about ten days I neither read my Bible or prayed. The Bible seemed foolish to me, and prayer was a mockery.

“You see, here is the view that the modernists take, so far as we can make it out.

“They believe in the inspiration of the Bible, but just certain portions of it. Some of the books

aren't inspired at all; others are partially inspired.

"Then they believe in the resurrection of Christ, but not a bodily resurrection, just a continuation of the principles and ideals of Jesus. The spirit with which He sought to change the world still lived on. This was the resurrection. When the Bible says that the disciples saw Him, it means that they saw in their hearts this great truth. The story of the empty tomb was arranged by the writers of the Gospels to satisfy the century-old belief of the Jews in the fact that there would be a bodily resurrection.

"They believe in the second coming of Christ, but that was merely the coming of the Holy Spirit.

"Christ was just a man whose personality was such that, by the power of suggestion, He could heal the sick.

"So you see, according to these views our faith is pretty well demolished and not worth much.

"While I was alone I began to think, and realized that in spite of all these things I had had a personal experience with the living Christ. If Christ lives, then the resurrection story of the Bible must be true, and it follows that the Bible must be the Word of God. At once I discovered that my faith was stronger than any teaching I might hear to the contrary and that it was something worth standing for.

"It must have been in answer to your prayers that we did not swing over to modernism entirely. Don't worry about that now, though, for we have something that cannot be shaken."

What an appeal to youth this letter holds! This student appears to have survived the ordeal of doubt; yet the vast majority are in grave danger of surrendering all that the Christian religion holds dear and precious. Young people, do not select a college where the termites of modernism have eaten away the pillars and undermined the foundation of Scripture truth. Do not venture on the enemy's ground and subject yourself to his sinister wiles and temptations.

And parents, do not place your children and youth in schools of learning where they will be robbed of their faith and forfeit the hope of eternal life. Though the college may be farther away, and the expense greater, how can you afford the risk? Should the youth lose confidence in the Bible as an infallible Guidebook, the path to sinful pleasures is opened wide. That Word is the only anchor of the soul. In the words of another:

"A Christian college is a college that makes every department support and defend the Christian faith. Its primary function is to turn out graduates who are first Christians and secondarily doctors, lawyers, or merchants.

In the tax-supported temples of learning the interest in religion is negligible, while among the so-called "Christian schools" there is a vast difference. With many the purpose and vision of the founders have become indistinct, the ambition to provide a modern liberal arts education has become dominant, and the distinctly Christian character, atmosphere, and instruction have faded to the vanishing point.

How could it be otherwise? For when modernism permeates a church, college, or seminary, it destroys every vital element of Christianity, leaving only an empty shell. While professing to be Christian, this liberalism denies the authority of Scripture, substitutes evolution for creation, and repudiates the virgin birth, atonement through Christ's blood, His resurrection, the hope of His second coming, and has no answer to the question, "What comes after death?"

This scholarly unbelief, an appalling sign of our times, was foretold in Bible prophecy. Said the apostle:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." 2 Peter 3:3-6.

Note carefully the above forecast regarding evolutionary philosophy. Its exponents, unwilling to recognize divine power in the creation of the world or the Flood in the time of Noah, also ridicule the idea of Christ's glorious appearing.

This attitude of ridicule was to be especially prevalent "in the last days." Formerly the scoffers were on the outside of the church; but today liberalism has enthroned itself in the sanctuary, and many voices are heard speaking in the language of the tempter of Eden, "Yea, has God said?"

But in spite of sledge-hammer blows from skeptics and liberals, the message of the Bible is unimpaired. From beginning to end it is a supernatural Book. When mere men have made such discoveries as the radio, radar, and the atomic bomb, why should it be thought strange for God to work miracles?

Yes, "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8); or that He should heal the sick, restore the lepers, give sight to the blind, deliver Daniel from the

lions, open prison doors for Peter, or foretell the future?

The gospel prophet envisioned a time when darkness would “cover the earth, and gross darkness the people”; but for such an hour the inspiring counsel was given: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Isaiah 60:1,2.

As we face this eventful postwar era, let there be no compromise with guesses, speculations, and pagan philosophies, nor with subtle doubt, infidelity, or mysticism. Let the churches and colleges that profess to be Christian “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Let the authoritative gospel message be heralded far and near, a message that acclaims God’s peerless standard of Christian attainment, that denounces sin, that presents Christ as the sin-pardoning Redeemer, that heralds His second appearing, and that gives hope and certainty for the eventful future.

Young man, young woman, may God bless you in selecting such a school, finding such a church, and witnessing for a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior.

11. In the World of Religion

When the merchant prince, John Wanamaker, was but eleven years of age, he made his first noteworthy investment, and in later years he wrote of the incident:

“I have, of course, made many large purchases of property in my time, involving millions of dollars. But it was as a boy in the country, at the age of eleven years, that I made my greatest purchase. In the little mission Sunday school I bought a small red leather Bible for two dollars and seventy-five cents, which I paid for in small installments. Looking back over my life, I see that that little red Book was the foundation on which my life has been built, and has made possible all that has counted in my life. I know now that it was the greatest investment and the most important and far-reaching purchase I ever made.”

For many years the Bible has maintained its position as the world’s best seller, and to those who study and practice its precepts, it is the supreme possession of a lifetime.

A most refreshing report comes from the Bureau of the Census in Washington, D.C. During the two darkest years of the recent war the production of fiction in the United States dropped fifty per cent; while during the same period the sale of Bibles increased by two and a half million dollars. This indicates that in a time of great stress the human spirit turns from the trivial and fantastic to satisfy the soul hunger upon the true and fundamental.

Yet it is highly appropriate to inquire: Since Bible sales have increased and readers of the Book are doubtless multiplied, has confidence in its teachings been correspondingly deepened? Evidently not! Numerous religious leaders regretfully admit that skepticism and liberalism are in the ascendancy, while in many ways the modern church has lost its vision and its living power.

More than half a century ago many intellectuals of Europe and America established what became known as higher criticism. They questioned the authority and authenticity of the Bible, and rejected many parts of it as mere folklore.

One after another the precious things of inspiration were discarded until evolution was substituted for creation, the law of God was declared outmoded, sin lost its scarlet color, marriage was termed a mere conventionality of a passing age, and science was acclaimed the savior of the world.

Under the spell of Nazism some went so far as to slander and vilify every sacred truth and relationship. Even the beautiful idealism of the sermon on the mount was ridiculed as the creed of weaklings, not a rule of life for the lusty “superman.”

This philosophy of terror reached its climax in the declaration of Joseph Goebbels, ill-starred minister of Nazi propaganda. Some two years before the German overthrow he asserted, “If the day should ever come when we must go, if, someday we are compelled to leave the scene of history, we will slam the door so hard that the universe will shake and mankind will stand back in stupefaction.”

Nor should we point the finger of reproach at some distant land or people. Says a well-known writer:

“For fifty years the pseudo intellectuals have been preparing their way and making their paths straight by scoffing at every distinction between right and wrong in private human relationships, in marriage and in the home, as well as in wider spheres. In the name of art and the intellect, as you may see on almost every bookstall, they have reduced all human affections and emotions to the most primitive and brutal levels.”

Why does this kind of literature flourish in a so-called Christian land? Because popular Christianity has lost its dynamic. Indeed, “nothing is so pathetic in modern Protestantism as its confusion over its own faith. It stands hesitant and uncertain in the presence of a society which has become indifferent to its appeal.”

Illustrating this confusion, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., recently presented a stirring appeal to the Christian church, most praiseworthy in certain respects, but which also urges the discarding of “creed, ritual, Biblical interpretation, and theology” as “minor concerns” and “nonessentials.”

In former times such a suggestion would have sounded wholly impertinent and impious. But when great churches no longer affirm belief in an inerrant Guidebook, a personal God, or a miracle-working Christ, when theological students may repudiate all these and yet be eligible for ordination to the sacred ministry, we begin to realize what liberalism has done to popular religion. But friends, a “creedless Christianity” would reduce the church to the level of an ethical system akin to Confucianism.

Another indication of trends is seen in the large number of sermons preached and religious books written in which the heart of the gospel is entirely omitted or ignored. As an example, consider the popular “Youth for Christ” movement which has attracted hundreds of thousands to the largest auditoriums of our great cities. This streamlined evangelism, employing modern commercial technique, “fast moving,” and “packed with thrills,” sounds the campaign cry, “Give your heart to Christ.”

Conversion is said to be absolutely essential, but none of the leaders really attempt to define what is involved in repentance, confession, the new birth, a knowledge of God, the privilege of prayer, or the life of victory. A well known religious editor speaks of these messages to youth as “milky extractions” in which the “blur of bliss is so vague and remote” as to be valueless; while a Chicago newspaperman terms certain phases of the procedure as a “smooth blend of religion and patriotism.”

The shadows falling across the world of religion are not without their significance. Personifying a sundial, the poet Whittier wrote:

“With warning hand I mark Time’s rapid flight
From life’s glad morning to its solemn night;
Yet, through the dear God’s love, U also show
There’s Light above me by the Shade below.”

Yes, fellow Christians, the darkening shadows of subtle unbelief are sure evidence of the light shining from the throne of God. We have been forewarned of these “perilous times” of lawlessness and ebbing faith, with multitudes possessing merely “a form of godliness.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5.) True to this forecast, popular religion seems content with Christian names, labels, terminology, and ritual; while in reality the parable set forth by the gospel prophet is vividly re-enacted in the modern world of religion:

“And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.” Isaiah 4:1.

Instead of the true Bread of Life, multitudes of professed Christians crave the leaven of modernism. Instead of the robe of Christ’s righteousness woven in the loom of heaven, they prefer the tattered garments of human invention, pagan philosophy, worldliness, and pleasure. Yet they desire to retain the name Christian, lest they bear the “reproach” of infidel or atheist. What a picture of liberal Christianity in this twentieth century!

During recent wars there has been a great revival of spiritualism. Many who longed for guidance, who desired to peer into the future, or who would gamble with the mystic possibility of communication with a slain loved one, became easy victims of this delusion. Ancient witchcraft is perpetuated under the various phases of modern Spiritualism and psychic research. It even assumes the vestments of Christianity, announces itself as a fresh revelation of truth to the world of religion. It claims a membership in this country of four million.

A time of war and unrest is most favorable to its development; and according to the prophetic Word we may look for it to appear in new and unexpected forms and guises as a miracle-working power, and as an almost overmastering delusion to deceive, if possible, “the very elect.” (Matthew 24:23-27; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11.)

During His brief residence in our world Christ made frequent mention of His return visit, which, He stated, would take place as a glorious pageant of the sky and as an overwhelming surprise to vast numbers of people. Yet He sadly remarked, “When the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8.

The apostle Paul was also endowed with the Spirit of prophecy, and as above mentioned, he foretold a time of unprecedented crime, wickedness, and peril that would characterize the “last days” of this world’s history. Then turning to the realm of religion, he observed, “Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” 2 Timothy 3:4, 5.

As a commentary on these words we note a recent report of Roger W. Babson in which it is revealed that the people of these United States spend forty-two times as much for pleasure, luxury, and crime as they do for church and religion. Billions are lavished upon amusement, squandered for vicious indulgences, and dissipated for wild pleasures.

Again, when multitudes of professed Christians no longer esteem the Bible as the inerrant Word, nor trust in a Savior who actually delivers from sin, why do they still maintain the forms and keep up the pretense? Here is a strange paradox that is hard to explain; yet this religious picture is in precise and complete fulfillment of New Testament prophecy.

Many recognize with alarm that liberal theology and popular Christianity have sold their priceless birthright and lost the vital essence of the gospel. Yet this very apostasy constitutes an outstanding sign of our times, and should inspire every devout Christian to renewed study of the Scriptures, to live a completely victorious life, and to herald the message, "Prepare to meet thy God."

12. The Great Unfinished Task

As we face the "brave new world" of tomorrow, what is the missionary outlook? Mission stations, hospitals, schools, and publishing houses representing millions of dollars are in ruins, essential equipment has been destroyed, and other mission property is old, damaged, and crumbling. To repair, rebuild, and rehabilitate these institutions in lands afar, the largest mission budgets of all time are being prepared.

But do missions pay? Let us visit a beautiful plot of ground overlooking the Pacific on the faraway outpost of Guadalcanal. Here are sixteen hundred of those little "white crosses that mean so much and say so little." One day the marines who were stationed near by saw a group of natives in the cemetery. Upon inquiry they learned that the islanders were beginning the erection of a memorial chapel to honor the servicemen who had fallen in battle.

Four thousand of the natives labored for more than two months in its construction. It is ninety feet long by twenty-six wide; its graceful thatched roof rises thirty feet in height and has a bell tower; its rattan walls are ingeniously woven into figures of the Christian cross and other variegated patterns. While this beautiful shrine, with its seating capacity for two hundred and eighty worshipers, represents the finest known example of Solomon Island artistry and craftsmanship.

Over the entrance is the inscription:

"THIS IS THE HOUSE OF GOD. THIS IS NONE OTHER THAN THE GATE OF HEAVEN"

At the dedicatory exercises a native Christian named Jason, leader of the construction corps, arose with simple dignity and made the presentation in these words:

"Me want to tell you all people that all me fellow belong Solomon build this church because we want to thank you. We have worked hard and we hope you will like this church. Also we want to thank all the Americans and Allies who have fought to push the enemy out of our land. Now we give this church to you. But this church no belong to you and me. This church belong God. And we ask God to bless us all. Thank you."

In a letter to a friend Marine Joe E. Ross, of Houston, Texas, who was with the detachment on Guadalcanal, wrote of his emotions:

"To the boys that have walked there in the evenings, that shrine means more than they will admit, even to themselves. Somehow it softens the fate of shipmates. I wish you could see it and love it as we do.

"When you see these things and have time to study them in the light of a happy world, it does brighten the day. When we see our chapel on the hill, we know why we are here and lose the desire to leave an unfinished job. Maybe you can understand how that little symbol means so much more than the lady with the torch in New York Harbor. This is a token of love from the hearts and hands of a trusting people."

The above story is one of many heart-warming incidents related by Henry P. van Dusen in his recent book, *They Found the Church There*. In a concluding chapter the author observes:

"Just fifteen years ago a small group of wealthy American philanthropists, disturbed by what they diagnosed as a waning public confidence in Christian missions, devised and financed an elaborate 'laymen's inquiry' into certain limited areas of missionary work, in India, China, and Japan. Their report, published under the title *Re-Thinking Missions*, had a wide reading and immense influence.

"Whatever the intention of its authors, the laymen's report undoubtedly served to encourage

The Spade and the Book – R Cottrell

misgivings, to shake and even shatter the confidence of large numbers of people in the missionary enterprise as a whole. It conveyed the impression that there were a few, probably a very few, individual instances of Christian work abroad which merited continuance; but that missions by and large were of dubious value and validity, hardly justifying well considered support.”

In his unique little volume Mr. Van Dusen presents the verdict of another “layman’s inquiry,” from soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. What they saw produced a remarkable transformation of opinion from indifference and skepticism to ardent praise, enthusiasm, and support.

An American soldier in New Georgia wrote of the marvelous co-operation “given wholeheartedly and cheerfully by these men who a few years ago were savages.” He continues:

“A handful of missionaries risked their lives and sacrificed the comforts and luxuries of home to teach these natives Christianity. It was because of this new-found faith and their trust in these white men that they worked ceaselessly on behalf of the American Army.” A chaplain also writes of their astonishing heroism:

“They have rescued countless fliers forced down at sea. They have fed, sheltered, and befriended scores of survivors off sunken ships. Their knowledge of the jungle trails and their uncanny ability to traverse those trails silently and with unbelievable speed make them excellent guides.”

From hundreds of other excerpts gleaned from V-mail, press reports, and clippings, we present a few statements illustrating the well-nigh universal chorus of commendation and esteem:

“I have had to abolish from my mind the ideas I had picked up about mission work when at home.”

“I must entirely revise my whole attitude to Christian missions.”

“Back home we had no idea of the good missionaries are doing.”

“The missionaries have proved their worth many, many times since we came overseas.”

“The best cure I can think of for atheism would be a few days spent with the missionaries here.”

“Now that I have seen, I sure am going to be a different Christian.”

“Now that I know what missions really are, I’ll give freely.”

The nineteenth century was frequently called “A Missionary Century”; but numerous religious writers sadly observe that the twentieth has appeared as one of partial missionary eclipse. It apparently required a tragic war to open the eyes of the world to the value of missionary endeavor. It was also the war that provided the incentive for an unprecedented distribution of Bibles, the American Bible Society alone and in one year publishing sufficient to build a stack of Bibles sixty miles high.

But the mere multiplication of Scripture is not enough; nor will the preaching of a social, cultural gospel suffice. The missionary who regards his task as “a reciprocal fellowship” with pagan philosophers, “a give and take arrangement,” and who goes forth “to confer rather than to convert,” is not fulfilling the great gospel, commission.

The genuine ambassador for Christ is sent to preach, not a new social order, but salvation not economics, but heart conversion; not democracy, but redemption through the Man of Calvary. This is the Christian’s supreme task. It is imperative! The Master bids us, “Go”; and Bible prophecy declares that just prior to our Lord’s second glorious appearing, “the everlasting gospel” is to be proclaimed with mighty power to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Revelation 14:6.

In our Savior’s remarkable forecast of world events He also made the definite announcement: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14.

The Bible does not state or indicate that the entire population of the world will be converted. It teaches rather that the gospel will be “proclaimed throughout the whole world to set the evidence before all the Gentiles; and then the end will come.” (Weymouth’s Translation.)

Here is the sign of signs, unique and definite and forceful. The world must be given an opportunity to receive or reject Christ. The Master will not return until the great commission has been fulfilled: He will return immediately upon its accomplishment.

Today, in spite of splendid missionary achievement, sixty-five per cent of the world’s population remains in the darkness of paganism. We thank God for the victories of the past; but with such modern facilities as the radio, short wave, and television, we are confident that the greatest days of missionary triumph are just ahead.

What a marvelous age in which to live! And how the war-torn lands of Europe and Asia need the

comforting, thrilling message of a crucified, risen, and soon coming Savior! Never before has the church of Christ been confronted by such a mighty challenge. Like Caleb and Joshua of old, we would respond, “Let us go up at once, and possess it”; for in the strength of Emmanuel “we are well able.”

Yes, according to the divine schedule, God’s program for foreign missions hastens onward to completion. In multiplying facilities for this marvelous world-wide task, He has opened new highways and practically annihilated time and space. By land, sea, and air the everlasting gospel is proclaimed, and in spite of international unrest and chaos the message speeds onward to prepare a people for the greatest event of the ages—the second coming of Christ.

“Then rise, O church, in all His power,
The message give in every land
The coming King is near at hand!
This is thy work, and this thy hour!”

13. Will Modern Zionism Succeed?

The little land of Palestine is much in the news. Our attention is also frequently directed to numerous pamphlets, leaflets, and magazine articles teaching that the Jews are soon to be gathered to their ancestral land, that Christ will return to reign as their king, and that He will occupy David’s throne in old Jerusalem. A prominent Christian Jew affirms his hope in these words:

“There are thousands of Jews who believe that the Messiah will come from heaven in great majesty and glory, and will bring peace and happiness to every Jew in Palestine, where He would gather all the Jews. This hope of the coming of the Messiah to redeem and deliver the Jews has been the star that has illumined their dark pathway and kept them from utter despair. If there had been no such hope, it is hardly possible that the Jews could have survived the affliction, the grief, and distress of about two thousand years.”

Yes, throughout some twenty centuries the plight of these “citizens of the world without a country” has been a continual tragedy. At the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus a million Jews perished; and subsequently the emperor Hadrian built a new city on the site of the Holy City and forbade the Jews on pain of death to enter it. Multitudes were herded into the slave markets.

Exiled Jews were terribly harassed in Persia. A hundred thousand were transported to Spain, and then driven out before the horrors of the Inquisition. In England and France they were subjected to massacre and expulsion; while in Germany they became the prey of riotous bands. Even Martin Luther is said to have reproached them in words like these:

“To this very day, we know not what devil brought them into our land. We did not bring them from Jerusalem. Beside that, no one keeps them. The country and the roads are open to them. Let them return to their own land. We will gladly give them presents if we can get rid of them, for they are a heavy burden upon us, a plague, a pestilence, a sore trial.”

Throughout the Middle Ages the Jews were frequently accused of sorcery, of offering human sacrifices, and of occasioning the calamities that befell Europe. Their lives were never safe, and for centuries the members of this unfortunate race were compelled to wear a distinguishing mark or badge upon their clothing.

For a time Poland became the great Hebrew refuge, and granted a liberal charter under which the Jews enjoyed religious liberty and racial security. But with the overthrow and partition of that hapless country, nearly half of the Jews of the world passed under the jurisdiction of Russia, where the most of them were crowded together in the Pale, a district averaging some three hundred miles in width, and extending from the Baltic Sea to the Crimea. Even within these bounds they were not permitted to move about at will, but were confined to designated ghettos, which are towns or sections of cities usually set off by a wall for their exclusive residence.

Prohibited from owning real estate, or from educating but a small percentage of their children, limited to but few specified trades and pursuits, subject to special taxes and numerous oppressive regulations, liable at any time to be moved about at the caprice of the government, the object of suspicion, hate, and frequent massacres by the populace, the Jews have been oppressed for centuries and their struggle

for existence has been unspeakably desperate.

During World Wars I and II the districts of Russia, Germany, Poland, Austria, and Rumania containing the bulk of the world's Jewish population became the great battlegrounds of Eastern Europe. But even more tragic was the cold, deliberate, frenzied Nazi program of Semitic annihilation. At least two million children of Abraham are thought to have perished at the hands of misguided and merciless fanatics.

All this has become history, but how remarkable that the true life story of the Hebrew people was accurately outlined by the pen of inspiration more than thirty-three centuries ago. Moses forewarned them that if they failed to obey the divine precepts they would be "oppressed and spoiled evermore"; would "become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations". That the Lord would scatter them "among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other," with no resting place for the soles of their feet; and that their lives would ever "hang in doubt." (Deuteronomy 28:15-68.)

All this has been accurately and literally fulfilled; but where are the powerful nations of antiquity that oppressed Israel? Not a single descendant of the ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, Hittites, Amorites, or Philistines can now be positively identified. On the other hand some sixteen million Jews exist today as living witnesses to the -authenticity of Scripture and the foreknowledge of our God.

Do you ask of the so-called "ten lost tribes"? The Book of Mormon' states that their descendants developed into the American Indians. A Christian bishop presents an elaborate argument to prove that the Japanese are the lost tribes. Some announce that they are to be found in the modern Germans, the Swedes, or the Norwegians. Still others claim that "the British commonwealth of nations are descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel, that Americans are the seed of Manasseh, while Englishmen are the seed of Ephraim."

All such ideas are mere theological will-o'-the-wisps. They spring from a fanciful, mystical interpretation of Scripture, and lead to a false and delusive hope. A similar warning should be sounded concerning the advocates of so-called Zionism who predict a literal return of the Jews to their ancient land.

Someone asks, "Is not the modern exodus of the Jews to Palestine, which began following World War I, a forerunner of greater incursions which are to culminate in the millennial age and the second coming of Christ?" No, the Old Testament prophecies which foretold a literal restoration in Canaan were fulfilled by the return of Israel as narrated in the book of Ezra; while other predictions point to the final gathering of all God's people in His eternal kingdom.

It is a sad and painful fact that a vast majority of the Hebrew race have forsaken the God of Abraham, Moses, and Elijah; hence any man-made Zionist enterprise could not be in harmony with the divine blueprint. Consider the drama of the prophet and potter's earthen bottle. The Lord instructed Jeremiah:

"Then shall thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shall say unto them, Thus said the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again." Jeremiah 19: 10, 11.

He who destroyed Jerusalem and dispersed the inhabitants because of their sins, forever settled the question of a complete return and restitution in old Canaan by asserting that it "cannot be." Likewise Christ Himself declared, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24.

But, friends, God has a program of Zionism infinitely superior to any human arrangement, that is soon to be gloriously consummated; and this restoration includes the dead as well as the living. Said the Lord:

"O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." "They shall dwell in the land and My servant David shall be their prince for ever." Ezekiel 37:12, 25.

This explicit language points unmistakably to a gathering beyond the grave made possible by a resurrection from the dead. In this age the original "bottle" will never be pieced together; but from among all peoples, both Jew and Gentile, God is gathering a people and transforming characters to be ready for His personal, imminent second coming. The righteous dead of all ages awaken from their long sleep, and together with the living righteous enter a city not built by Solomon, beautified by Herod, or designed by twentieth-century architects, but one "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

To that glad home-coming the invitation will soon be extended, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34.

14. “Here We Are”

The multitude of surprises furnished by modern science and invention appear in endless and amazing panorama. Considering all these wonders, we are reminded of God’s challenge to Job:

“Can thou send lightning, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?” Job 38:35.

Job was speechless and silent. Millenniums passed before man could give an affirmative answer. But modern genius has requisitioned and commissioned the lightning, scientifically and commercially known as electricity, to perform a legion of serviceable tasks. With the dawn of the nineteenth century, Daniel’s prophecy concerning the increase of knowledge and multitudes running to and fro (Daniel 12:4), began to meet its marvelous fulfillment.

And what phenomenal results! Behold the miracles of radio, radar, television, atom smashing, and speedy transportation! As if in response to the prophetic word, all these unite in a chorus of testimony, “Here we are.” In the words of Kipling:

“Speak the word and think the thought Quick ‘tis as with lightning caught, Over, under, lands or seas To the far antipodes.”

We send impulses along the air waves to Moscow, Chungking, Cape Town, or Valparaiso; and from the farthest antipodes the reply comes instantly, “Here wee are!” Yet there are other things equally marvelous.

Twenty-five centuries ago God sent the afore mentioned radiogram concerning the increase of travel and knowledge that would mark the “time of the end.” “Yes,” comes the reply, “today we travel by train, steamship, motorboat, auto, and airplane,” while from thousands of laboratories and manufacturing plants inventors respond, “Here we are, and here is the vast array of wonders we have produced in this new and thrilling age.”

A message was likewise communicated through the apostle James that in the last days the rich would heap together their treasures. (James 5:1-3.) Listen to the bankers, capitalists, and multimillionaires as they respond, “Here we are, and here are the vast pyramids of wealth that we have amassed.” Another part of this prophecy declares: “Your gold and silver is cankered.” And why? Because it is hoarded. Billions are today deposited in underground vaults; and other large sums are turned to “frozen assets.” When the depression of 1930 struck the world, true to this prophetic utterance, there ascended from the rich a distressed outcry. But that was only a faint murmur as compared to the future when mercenary plutocrats will cast their ill-gotten gold and silver “to the moles and to the bats” and call to the mountains, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne.” Isaiah 2:20; Revelation 6:16.

John beheld that, just prior to the second coming of Christ, and while the seventh trumpet pealed forth its final warning, the nations were angry. Ask them today and from the exhausted war-torn lands there comes the tragic answer: “This twentieth century marks the crowning fury and most intense international hatred the world has ever seen. We have waged the two deadliest conflicts of all history. With bated breath we await the events of tomorrow.” As we read the messages of the great Book, we are assured that troubles and jealousies will continue until Armageddon bursts upon us in all its fury.

Another communication to the peoples of the twentieth century and delivered through the inspired apostle Paul announced that the “last days” would be characterized by brutal crime and lawlessness. (2 Timothy 3:1-5.) What about the wolves of society? “Here they are” in our own United States, a black army of crime 5,000,000 strong. Only four per cent of them are behind prison bars, while a large majority walk our streets, ride in good automobiles, and live in respectable homes.

Pointing to this age, the prophecy also brings an indictment against modern society in the words, “without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers.” The socialites of our day make the cynical response, “We have shattered the sacred ideals of wedlock. One marriage in every four ends in divorce or separation, while in some of our States and cities the number of divorces equals the number of marriages.” Yes, the home breakers of today are forced to acknowledge, “Here we are, and conditions are just as depraved as they were in the days of old Sodom.”

Another specific characteristic of these times as enumerated by the apostle is juvenile delinquency. With the family altar broken down, religion neglected, the normal home life disrupted, and strong drink making its inroads, it is natural that the children become “disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.” To this charge our lawless youth confess, “Here we are; one third of the vicious criminals in many of our penal institutions are young people who should be in high school or college; while during recent years the army of youthful gangsters has increased to become a national menace.”

The Spade and the Book – R Cottrell

The enumeration continues, “Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” “Here we are,” comes the echo from amusement-loving multitudes. In such soul destroying pleasures as gambling, racing, movie-going, liquor drinking, and tobacco using, we Americans annually spend over \$25,000,000,000. Yes, twenty million of us attend the movies every day.

And what of the statement, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof”? In numerous circles the forms of religion are still popular; but upon inquiry a majority confess: “We modernists no longer believe in the literal inspiration of the Bible, in creation, in redemption through the blood of Christ, or in His second personal appearing. Yet we are pleased to keep up the beautiful rites, forms, and sacraments of traditional Christianity.”

The skepticism and atheism of our day were also foreshadowed in the prophecies of Christ and the apostle Peter. (Luke 18:8; 2 Peter 3:3-5.) In fulfillment, many voices declare that “religion is the opiate of the people”; while it is a tragic fact that in our colleges and universities a large majority of the educators have lost faith in God and in His Inspired Word. Yes, scholarly unbelief is in itself a notable sign of our times.

Painting a brighter picture, the seer of Patmos announced that just prior to Christ’s second coming there would be a mighty evangelistic movement, a proclamation of the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, calling upon all men everywhere to “fear God,” obey His commandments, and be ready in heart and life to meet a soon-coming Savior. (Revelation 14:6, 7, 14, 16.) This heaven-born message, utilizing all modern agencies for travel and communication, now speeds on its way by land and sea and air. Radio plays its part in the divine program; and here are lines from what has been termed “the first gospel radio poem”:

“The speeding message far transcends
The bounds and limits man assigns;
We use Thy lightning to our ends
Afar; we follow Thy designs.

“O may the wave lengths of our souls
Be tuned and measured to Your own.
And keyed to pitch no foe controls,
Preserve our contact with Thy throne.”

ALICE M. SHEPARD

Behold the response to John’s prophetic forecast. As we pen these words, men and women of more than 400 countries and island fields, and speaking some 800 languages and dialects, joyously yet humbly testify: “Here we are, the people of the Book, proclaiming the everlasting gospel, and fulfilling prophecy. We have renounced the riches, pleasures, and honors of the world; we are asking Christ to purify our hearts and clothe us with the robe of His righteousness, that we may be prepared for the happy home-going so soon to be realized.”

At such an hour and with such a hope the true Christian should find his chief delight in telling others the wonderful story. The words of Jesus regarding those who were favored to witness His first advent are appropriate and timely for us who live in these momentous days. To His disciples He said:

“Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.” Matthew 13:16, 17.

Yes, what a wonderful privilege is ours! Let us earnestly pray that God will grant to us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand the tremendous import of passing events. Then let the outpouring of the Holy Spirit descend upon His waiting church.

“Coming, yes, He’s coming!
Let all the ransomed sing;
The hills are bright with holy light;
All hail the coming King.”

15. The Way Out

In his observation on current events the late H. G. Wells, world-famed historian and author, made some of the most dynamic and arresting statements of his brilliant career. As reported in the public press, this seventy-nine year-old publicist asserted that “the end of everything we call life is close at hand, and cannot be evaded,” also that “this world is at the end of its tether.” In speaking of “the pattern of events,” Mr. Wells said:

“Hitherto events have been held together by a certain logical consistency as the heavenly bodies, as we know them, have been held together by the pull of the golden cord of gravitation.

“Now it is as if the cord has vanished and everything is driving to anywhere at a steadily increasing velocity. The limit of the orderly, secular development of life had seemed to be a definitely fixed one, so it was possible to sketch out the pattern of things to come. But that limit has been reached and passed into hitherto incredible chaos.

“We may be spinning into the vortex of extinction, but we don’t apprehend as much. There is no way out, around, or through.”

These gloomy foreboding arise from an entirely false concept of life, the world, and the universe. As an evolutionist, Mr. Wells denied the divine handiwork of creation, left God entirely out of his reckoning, and believed that the world and its people should continually advance to higher and still higher stages of development. But when the march of events demonstrated that such philosophy is wholly deceptive and misleading, he declared that “this world is at the end of its tether,” and that there is “no way out.”

From human appearances this view is correct. But there is a God in heaven who still presides over the destinies of men and nations. There, too, stands His inerrant Word, which reveals that this very impasse in world affairs, bringing darkness and despair to the scholarly skeptic, is one of the divine tokens indicating the approach of history’s crowning event. Christ’s second personal visit to this world provides “the way out.”

Scripture prophecy is positive and eloquent concerning our Lord’s return, and these predictions are radiant with hope and assurance. Yes, “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.” Hebrews 9:28.

It was on the eve of the crucifixion, when the faith of His disciples was to be so sorely tested, that the Master directed their minds to the delightful home-going in a land safe from all sorrow and trouble, and those vibrant words constitute the supreme promise of Scripture:

“Let not your heart be troubled: you 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. 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 you may be also.” John 14:1-3.

No, this planet is not to freeze up, dry up, or explode by atomic energy. Christian confidence in the Master’s return is not a vain expectation, for there is the assured promise of God’s own Son, “I will come again”; while in the closing chapter of Scripture the covenant is three times repeated: “I come quickly.”

Enoch, Job, and Isaiah prophesied of that glorious event when they would meet their Redeemer. (Jude 14, 15; Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 25:9.) Likewise the hopes of Abraham were centered in that “better country,” and in the “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker-is God.” Hebrews 11:16, 10.

The disciple whom Jesus loved wrote with confidence of the time when “we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:2. James, the brother of Jesus, urged the church to be patient “unto the coming of the Lord”; and with ardent delight Peter declared that “when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away.” James 5:7; 1 Peter 5:4.

In his inspired messages to churches and individuals Paul frequently mentioned “that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:13.

Again he wrote: “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 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 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

Christ appears the second time to resurrect the righteous dead, to translate the righteous living, to unite the family of earth with the family of heaven, and destroy the finally impenitent. Nineteen hundred years ago He ascended to heaven to prepare a place for His people; soon He will return to consummate the

purpose of the ages. “And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Matthew 24:31.

The Bible teaches that Christ’s second appearing will be personal, visible, glorious, and premillennial. False christs may arise, do arise; but no child of God need be deceived; for even Satan himself will be unable to counterfeit or camouflage the glorious majesty of that event. When our Lord appears, no newspaper or radio broadcast will announce His arrival:

“For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:27-30.

As the amazed disciples stood upon the crest of Olivet, looking intently upward for the last glimpse of their departing Lord, two shining angels stood at their side to convey the comforting, cheering promise. “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11.

He ascended bodily and will return “in like manner”; He was borne upward in a cloud; and of His second coming it is written, “Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.” Revelation 1:7. Angels formed His cloudy escort to heaven; and when He returns in glory, “all the holy angels” are with Him. Matthew 25:31. Nineteen centuries ago He came as a babe in Bethlehem’s manger; He will come again in sovereign majesty.

Christ’s second coming is not at death, as some affirm, for He returns as the Life-giver to abolish death and destroy him who has “the power of death.” That event is not a mere “secret rapture” or an outpouring of the Holy Spirit; for “this same Jesus” returns personally to lead that majestic pageant of the skies.

His coming is not in the darkened rooms of the spiritualist medium; for “if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not.” Matthew 24:26. Neither will it occur in the desert, for His appearing is a world-wide spectacle, marking the termination of the gospel age, and the dawning of eternity.

Friends, in this confidence we are not following cunningly devised fables. The coming of Christ is no longer to be considered as a remote or ridiculous impossibility. In this day when man has discovered some of the secrets of radio and radar, of cosmic and atomic energy, why should it be thought incredible that God can raise the dead or transcend the ordinary laws of nature to visit this planet and transport its virtuous citizens to some other part of His universe?

Yet such is the divine plan. This bruised and troubled world needs Jesus, and His return will not long be delayed. In striving for a peaceful, happy world, man has dismally failed. It is time for God to intervene in human affairs. From the chaos and gloom He now points the way out, and this “blessed hope” brings to the Christian fullness of joy and genuine optimism.

“Yes this is our hope, it is built on His word. The glorious appearing of Jesus, our Lord; Of promises all, it stands as the sum: “Behold I come quickly, hold fast till I come.”

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for these things, give diligence that you may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight.” 2 Peter 3:14, A.R.V.

16. Home At Last

Millions of our servicemen have returned from overseas. Others are on the way. But no matter where they go, what they see, or-the experiences through which they pass, there is one insatiable longing in every breast. There is one place to which their minds constantly revert, one spot of which they muse by day and dream by night, one city or town or countryside for which the spirit yearns-it is that dear and precious place called home.

Even in this changing world, with all its perplexities and sorrows, the cottage of a few years’ residence often tugs heavily at the heartstrings. How much -deeper and stronger should be our interest in a home where changes never come! But what about that future estate? Is it real? Is it actual?

In current magazines and over the radio we hear much of “the new world of tomorrow.” Architects, inventors, and scientists tell us of ultramodern homes with conveniences and comforts beyond our fondest expectations. Of agricultural equipment and methods enabling a few men to produce prodigious harvests; of manufacturing devices and processes that will equip mankind with marvelous new tools and

machines. Of transportation facilities capable of speeding passengers to the ends of the earth in but little more than a single day; and of new medical and surgical discoveries that will curb disease and lengthen the life span.

Others vision the elimination of city slums; of higher standards of living for all peoples; of fear, insecurity, and poverty banished from the planet; and of a world family of nations living in friendly and happy accord. A world-renowned publicist suggests that to effect these ideals might require a few million years.

But how may mortals proceed to inaugurate a truly golden age? By what magic or alchemy will they eliminate national jealousies, business rivalries, class struggles, racial friction, and social discords? Friends, the power that can transform human nature is alone to usher in the real Utopia. (Jeremiah 13:23; Ezekiel 36:26-28.)

For authoritative information concerning the future, we turn to the Book of books. In its pages we are assured that the fondest dreams of scientists, industrialists, and sociologists are as nothing when compared with the wondrous surprises God has in store for the inhabitants of this planet. Consider His remarkable promise of the future:

“As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9.

The Inspired Word also reveals that we are approaching the end of the age, that “this present evil world” is soon to be completely renovated, and that a “new earth” with its new citizens and civilization is about to be established. That land, we are assured, is to be pure and beautiful, and the homeland of a just and virtuous people. (2 Peter 3:13.) The Bible also states that “the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth.” Proverbs 11:31. And from the lips of the Master came the promise, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5. Wonderful to contemplate! This old earth that has been so marred by the curse is to become the actual Paradise home of the redeemed.

It will not be a realm of idleness, but of activity with useful labor for tireless hands and enjoyable tasks for flawless artisans. Vineyards and orchards are to be planted and cultivated. Houses will be built, and beautiful parks and woodlands will adorn the countryside. Vast enterprises will be carried forward and the loftiest aspirations attained. (Isaiah 65:17, 21, 22.)

The prophet Isaiah presents a vivid pen picture of the new earth:

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency, of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.” Isaiah 35:1, 2.

The animals of field and forest will be there, but their natures will be entirely transformed.

“No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast,” requiring bars and cages; but with changed instincts “the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain.” Isaiah 35:9; 11:6-9. Likewise the citizens of that transformed country “dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.” Ezekiel 34:25.

Here we are afflicted with aches and infirmities, with losses and crosses. But in that day the fondest dreams will be more than realized; the anguish and disquietude will all be past; for “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.” Isaiah 33:24. “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” Isaiah 35:5,6.

Shall we recognize our friends in that glad tomorrow certainly, for the identity of each will be preserved.

“Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.” 1 Corinthians 13:12. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does 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.” 1 John 3:2. The capital of that country will be a city of architectural wonders and “far distances.”

“And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Revelation 21:2, 3.

With vivid imagination picture that celestial city, three hundred and seventy-five miles on a side,

and occupying an area nearly as large as the State of California, or approximately the size of all the New England States, together with New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. Consider the enclosing jasper walls “great and high,” fifteen hundred miles in circumference, their twelve foundations “garnished with all manner of precious stones,” the color scheme of which is declared to be more intricate and beautiful than that of the rainbow. View the twelve massive, pearly gates, three on a side, each gate composed of “one pearl.”

Then what delight to walk along those majestic avenues which are paved with “pure gold, as if were transparent glass.” Residents of that metropolis will require no light of candle, torch, electric arc, or neon glow, “for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Outside the city, however, to gladden the vast areas of the re-created new earth, both sun and moon will shine with increased splendor. (Revelation 21:10-23; Isaiah 30:26.)

Describing the palace grounds, the seer of Patmos wrote:

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Revelation 22:1, 2.

Like a mighty banyan tree with trunks on “either side of the river,” the tree of life from the long-lost Paradise sends forth its spreading branches to arch the tide, and yield its never-failing monthly harvest of twelve manner of luscious fruits.

The years of eternity will continue to bring new wonders to admire, new themes to comprehend, and new vistas to gladden the senses. There all the sorrows of life will be healed and forgotten, its disappointments understood, and its perplexities made plain. We shall then the more clearly understand the ministry of trial, and sense in larger measure the surpassing love that inspired Jesus Christ to make the infinite sacrifice upon Calvary. We shall there see and associate with our Redeemer, and listen with rapt attention as the great Teacher unfolds the romance of creation, the mysteries of the physical world, and the science of redemption that has restored man to sonship with God.

Another vital feature intensifies our interest. This twentieth century, replete with fulfilled prophecy, emphasizes the thrilling fact that we near the time of the anticipated home-going; and the question of supreme personal import is, Will I, will you, be among the welcome guests? The answer is explicit: “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14.

Then follows the affectionate farewell invitation of Scripture, “Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17.

That “whosoever” is an appeal to you and me. Would we live in a postwar world without fear, hunger, poverty, accidents, crime, illness, or death, and where every reasonable desire will be abundantly satisfied? Come. Yes, do not delay; accept the divine, heart-warming invitation today, and make definite arrangements to enter God’s homeland and share in its captivating pleasures, congenial tasks, delightful research, and gratifying associations.