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IN THE AIR

AT the beginning of the present century the air was an undiscovered and unconquered realm.

People, then, ridiculed the idea of men flying in machines heavier than air.

The present century, however, had only advanced a few years when Hiram Maxim, in England, and Orville Wright, in America, performed the impossible by flying a short distance in man-made machines through the air. About five years later M. Bleriot, a Frenchman, crossed the English Channel for the first time in a monoplane, and declared with triumph, "I have brought England and France together."

The ridicule of the mass concerning the conquest of the air died forever in the stirring days of the Great War, when airships, bombing machines, and zeppelins brought terror to

thousands of men, women and children. We can well recall a tragic night in London in 1918, when a zeppelin raid drove many terror-stricken people to the cellars and tubes of that great city. While trying to calm a few women in the cellar of a city boarding-house, a bomb fell in a nearby street with such terrific noise and vibration that the boarding-house trembled to its foundation, and women burst into cries of anguish and fear.

Since that war the air has been the scene of many triumphs. The Atlantic was crossed by Lindbergh in his lonely three-thousand-miles flight. The late Sir Ross Smith and Sir Keith Smith blazed the trail from England to Australia. The late Sir Charles Kingsford Smith startled the world again and again by his remarkable flights; while Scott and Black smashed all records in the Melbourne Centenary Race, of 1934, by linking England and Australia together in little more than a few hours' flight. Since that remarkable race the conquest of the air has been continued by Melrose, Mollison, the brave Miss Batten, and many other fliers.

The nations of the world, fully realising that World War II would be won or lost in the air, spent much money and time preparing great air fleets for action.

Mr. Stanley Baldwin, in addressing the House of Commons on May 22nd, 1935, concerning the creation of seventy-one new air squadrons, said:—"I have been occupying myself studying the questions of air raid precautions, and I tell the House that I have been made almost physically sick to think that

I and my friends, and statesmen of every country in Europe, 2,000 years after our Lord was crucified, should be spending our time seeing how we can take mangled bodies of children to hospital, and prevent poisoned gas from going down the throats of the people."

Later, Mr. Baldwin said the air menace was "the most fearful terror and prostitution of man's knowledge that has ever been known in the world." How strange that the air should have been a mystery—a baffling mystery—for the long centuries of the world's history, and then suddenly, within thirty years, should be unveiled as a realm of intense human activity.

"The air has enveloped the globe from the beginning of time," wrote F. W. Pitt. "It has absorbed the secrets of history since the world began, and until this generation no one on earth knew it, but now we know that every idle word, every noble speech, every curse, and every prayer has gone 'over the air' to be registered somewhere until the secrets of all hearts are manifested."

This is a solemn statement; but in the Bible we read something equally as solemn, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and 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" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Thus, the Word of God declares that as the air has suddenly become the theatre of human discovery, it will also become the theatre of a

wonderful divine drama at the time of our Lord's Second Advent. On that day of days the Redeemer will descend from the Throne of God into the air; and immediately all His saints—those who have accepted Him as their personal Saviour—will arise from earth and grave to meet Him in that realm. Do you ridicule this prophecy, my friend? Remember, many ridiculed the idea of flying by aeroplane a few years ago; but the seeming impossible came to pass, and to-day the air is alive with winged craft. The very sound of an aeroplane above your head should awaken you to the solemn fact that God has issued a warning to an unbelieving world that the time is at hand when He will perform all that He has foretold "in the air." Recall again the sacred record of our Lord's departure from the earth: "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). Our Lord ascended to His Father's throne through the air, and the Scriptures assure us that "this same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." How true! He will come "in the air" to meet His own servants, and later will come "through the air" to the earth to judge the nations.

Many passages of Scripture point to the fact that the time for this appearing "in the air" to receive His own is at hand. We have only space to mention a few here.

Daniel 12:4: "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." During the last hundred years we have seen the increase of knowledge in electricity, the telegraph, the telephone, the aeroplane, and the wonders of wireless and television. Surely the time of the end is upon us.

Luke 21 : 24: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." For centuries the Holy City was under the heel of the Gentile nations, but Great War I lifted that heel and liberated the city for the Jews to again occupy it.

Luke 21 : 25, 26, 27: "Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; . . . Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

After the close of Great War I there was much distress and perplexity among the nations, and of later years there arose great fear concerning another world conflict.

This burst upon the world in 1939 with furious fighting, of which the most vital was "in the air."

This conflict closed with the explosion of the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945.

To-day, less than a score of years after Hiroshima, the air is more than ever the major realm of man's activity. Yes, and the

prophecy concerning the "distress of nations" is more than ever true.

In this regard, Dr. Ernest V. Liddle, of Blanchard, U.S.A., well warns the world:—"Only two major cataclysmic events face men to-day. Either one will end the world in its present state. They are **ATOMIC WAR OR THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST.**"

Surely, we need not turn to other references (of which there are many), but rather let me urge you now to "prepare to meet your God." How can this be done?

By sincere acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, and confession of Him as Lord. His sacrifice on Calvary for your sins will then avail to cover you from God's righteous judgments, and you will be "accepted in the Beloved," and saved from "the wrath to come."

Come to the Saviour now with this simple prayer upon your lips:

"Prepare me for Thy coming; for I know That in an hour we think not Thou wilt come. Washed in Thy Blood, and clothed in raiment fair,

May I be fit to meet Thee in the air."

My friend, make your decision for Christ at once, for "Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

JOHN G. RIDLEY.