

## Chapter 1

### Along the Twentieth-Century Trail

We live in a transformed world, and we are traveling adown the Twentieth-Century Trail at a dizzy pace. Activity has become a frenzied whirl. On every side precedents and records are being broken, while the marvelous and the impossible of yesterday become the commonplace of today. Magellan and Drake occupied some three years each in circumnavigating the globe. In the childhood of millions still living, "around the world in eighty days," was hailed as a whirlwind achievement. Now the intrepid birdman slips around the circle in about a tenth of that time.

Efficiency and speed become the very essence of modern life. Uncle Sam possesses a "mile-a-minute army" unit. Equipped with motor cycles, armored cars, and tanks, this entire regiment sweeps through rural districts at a speed of sixty miles an hour. "Wings sprout on the iron horse," and a machine, half locomotive and half airplane, thunders along the rails with unprecedented Velocity. A naval cruiser, with not a man on board, and operated entirely by radio, puts on full steam, plows the waters at the rate of thirty miles an hour, turns about sharply, fires a broadside into an imaginary enemy, and does many other spectacular exploits.

Comfortably seated in home or office, one may now converse with passengers on an air trip, and by means of radio photography, view the rapidly shifting landscape beneath the plane. A parachute jumper takes a photograph of; himself while darting downward from plane to earth, while a New York inventor claims the production of a kodak that will photograph the swiftest bullet that cleaves the air.

#### Marvelous Scientific Progress

With the march of modern invention, how the globe shrinks in size! Said a writer in the *World's Work*:

"This world is now just one tenth of a second wide. Wireless has done it. Man has touched the ether waves with the perturbations of his restless spirit, and within the winking of an eye, by man-made receptive nerves, at the antipodes his brothers hear his speech. At last the world is one chamber, where no man, however remote in the flesh from other men, is beyond the sound of the voices of his fellows. If the inventions

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of present daily use had been in existence in their time, Robinson Crusoe on his lonely island, Columbus in his caravel, Caesar in Britain, even Dante in the remotest hell, could have heard the gossip of London, the weather report in Genoa, the chariot racing results in Rome, and the voice of the lost Beatrice.”

In a large American city, the approaching darkness automatically turns on the city lights, while the dawn of day extinguishes them in like manner. Using a new device, radio music in the home is accompanied by an ever-changing color scheme. Radio beams now direct air traffic through dense fog, while a ray of light from a mirror automatically stops the speeding express train. Volcanoes are now given useful employment, their hot steam being used to operate laundries and to heat dwellings. The former crude methods of ventilation now give place to modern buildings with “homemade weather,” with “air that is washed, cooled, and dried during the summer, and cleansed, warmed, and healthfully moistened during the winter.”

A young woman, almost deaf from her birth, submitted to an operation at the hand of a skillful surgeon. New openings were drilled through the bone into the middle ear. She heard, and was troubled lest the doctor had “made the holes too big;” for she had never dreamed “that this was such a noisy world.” A movie-talkie machine faithfully recorded this remarkable operation on the film for the benefit of students and scientific circles.

The material world is yielding up its secrets. Coal, for example, in addition to its value as fuel, is made to produce medicines, cosmetics, photographic supplies, paints, roofing, sugar, and scores of other articles. An engineer has devised a way to squeeze gas out of iron, so that a few old stove lids may yield enough fuel to cook the morning meal. A physicist causes iron to float in the air. An inventor constructs a meter to measure accurately the noise in the home, in a city street, or in a throbbing airplane. All these are but a few of the modern creations that greet us on every hand.

Have we nearly attained the goal of all perfection? On the contrary, scientific and industrial leaders are of the opinion that we have but reached the threshold of inventive marvels. “Through the haze and mists of the twilight,” observes Sir Oliver Lodge, “we catch a glimpse of a rosy and hopeful dawn,” He writes as an evolutionist, but writes far more truthfully than he knows. There are sure omens of a rosy dawn; there are bigger surprises just around the corner than the most

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astute genius has imagined, but not along the line of Sir Oliver's thought.

### This Amazing Era Foretold

From the beginning, our heavenly Father knew all the secrets of chemistry, physics, natural science, and of life itself. To present unmistakable proof that He understands our thoughts "afar off," that His discernment is more penetrating than X ray or radio, He foretold this era of modern achievement. In a prophecy of the Great Book penned 2,500 years ago, the heavenly messenger said to the prophet: "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.

For a hundred generations men had built their homes, planted their fields, harvested their grain, and traveled by land and sea just as their ancestors had done. Then suddenly, with the dawn of the nineteenth century, the heart and mind were stirred to devise, to achieve, to discover, to blaze a new trail, to inaugurate a new civilization. In every field of human attainment behold the marvelous change! In medicine, in surgery, in household comforts, in factory equipment, in farming implements, in forest, mill, and laboratory, in transportation and communication, and in government administration, we live in a transformed world.

Observe carefully: In the infinite plan of God, all this was scheduled, timed, and foretold two and a half millenniums ago, and when the hour was struck, the God of heaven touched the springs of human genius to produce the miracle of revolution in thought and activity around the globe. Here is undeniable evidence that God has not left us without witness, and that the Bible is a divine, up-to-date guidebook. The

increase of knowledge during the last century "is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." Likewise the prophetic word declared, "Many shall run to and fro," and, in fulfillment, we behold the multitudes of earth hurrying about by land and sea and air. Literally, this modern world is "on the wind."

As this prophecy crystallizes into history, it prepares the way for the fulfillment of numerous other Scripture forecasts. A man devises a new machine, a shorter process, or a magic formula, which, if shrewdly handled, transforms him overnight into a capitalist. Many of our

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distinguished inventors have become men of wealth. In a century, millionaires are multiplied a thousand-fold. With modern machinery, transportation, and communication, gigantic combines are made possible. Corporations and governments form monopolies to control trade, to possess the valued raw materials, and to hoard vast supplies of gold in a few great favored vaults. Such combinations of power and wealth bring stupendous problems and perils. Here also is the remarkable sequel to a New Testament prophecy:

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.... Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.” James 5:1-3.

### Wealth Breeds Trouble

With this heaping together of treasure come those enemies of capitalism - radical labor unions, Socialism, and Bolshevism. The same Bible prophecy anticipated this titanic struggle in words as follows:

“Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.” Verses 4, 5.

In this contest genuine Christians are not to become fiery partisans, but are bidden, “Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” Verse 8.

### slumbering continents awake

The increase of knowledge at “the time of the end” leads also to the awakening of slumbering millions in Asia and Africa. Multitudes of unknown and darkened peoples hear the whistle of steamship, the roar of the railway train, the throb of the airplane motor. Just prior to Armageddon and the world’s harvest, the prophet Joel described the trumpet call to awaken the great pagan world. (Joel 3:9-13.) Behold today the marvelous fulfillment of this prophecy! From Japan on the east to Gibraltar and Morocco on the west, Young Asia and Young Africa have heard the bugle blast. Some are up and doing; the others are feverish to rush into the arena.

As these far-reaching developments literally change the face of continents and arouse more than half a billion men and women from

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the stupor of ages, is it not time that we, too, brush away the spiritual cobwebs and open our eyes to the towering significance of these events? God declared that “the time of the end” would be marked and designated by wonders of scientific attainment, communication, transportation, the vast accumulation of wealth, the intense conflict between capitalism and labor, and the dramatic awakening of the pagan world. How marvelous the fulfillment! Traveler along the Twentieth-Century Highway, do you inquire what time it is? According to the divine hourglass, this is “the time of the end.”