

The Bible and

OUR TIMES



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British and American troops moving up to the front line in Korea.

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THE GREAT DEBATE

By A. S. Maxwell

BEGINNING as a discussion over the necessity of sending troops to Europe, what has become known as the "great debate" has grown in scope—and bitterness—on both sides of the Atlantic until it embraces almost every phase of international affairs. Just when some thought it was dying down, the summary dismissal of General MacArthur fanned it to white heat again. Now only events can be the arbiter of the controversy.

It is not for us to take sides in a matter of this kind. *THE BIBLE AND OUR TIMES* is not a political organ. Rather is it dedicated to the proclamation of the grace of God and, in particular, the giving of His last message to mankind.

At the same time we would not for one moment minimize the importance of the issues involved. They are of the deepest significance to Europe, to the United States, and to the whole world. They affect the future of civilization itself. And because of this we feel that there is too much emphasis upon the opinions of men and not enough upon God's. We are constantly asked to consider the words of generals, statesmen, politicians, and others, but who ever suggests considering what God has to say?

There would be less acidity in the present discussion, and a lot more peace of mind for everybody, if we would all try to remember that God knows the way out of the dilemma.

There is no "great debate" with Him. To Him the future is as clear as the past. He knows the end from the beginning. Nothing is hidden from His sight, nor is there any problem which His infinite wisdom cannot solve.

God's Stake in History

"Don't overlook God," counsels Edward H. Pruden in *The Christian Century*. And he is right. We are all so busy, so consumed with our own interests, and our own importance, that we are all tempted to leave God out of our calculations. As Dr. Pruden says: "In so much of our thinking to-day every conceivable material thing is taken into consideration, while we forget that God has a stake in the future and that He is deeply concerned over the ultimate developments of history. We need to remind ourselves again and again that He still sits upon the throne of His glory; that He hasn't the slightest idea of abdicating His sovereignty to any earthly power; and that He has spiritual resources about which we have never even dreamed. Evil men can always be counted upon to do some foolish thing which will result in their own ultimate overthrow. We can be sure that the future is not in their hands, but in God's."

God's "stake in the future" is much greater than most people realize. So is His concern with the "ultimate developments of history." The prophet Daniel realized this when he said: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: and He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings and setteth up kings: . . . He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him." Dan. 2:20-22. The prophet Isaiah revealed a similar glimpse of the Almighty when he wrote that with Him "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing." Isa. 40:15.

The "Great Debate" in Egypt

History warns us that in any "great debate" men should never overlook God. Long years ago there was a great controversy in Egypt. On one side was the national leader and on the other an ex-general. The bone of contention was whether or not a certain number of individuals—potential soldiers—should move to Palestine. While the Bible speaks chiefly of the opinions of Pharaoh and Moses, we can

be sure that the debate raged throughout Egypt. Ultimately, of course, it was God's plan which came to pass: but the Egyptians would have been saved much trouble and sorrow if they had united with Moses in seeking to know the divine will.

Another "great debate" took place in Persia about 500 B.C. Again it concerned the Jews and involved the emperor and some of his highest officials. Haman was all for swift action, in the form of extermination. Queen Esther, a Jewess, was naturally on the other side, with Mordecai and others. Undoubtedly a matter of this magnitude was discussed all over the empire, and beyond. The outcome is known to all. Israel was saved. The will of God prevailed. But again it would have been far better for everybody—and Haman in particular—had they sought God's guidance.

The "Great Debate" in Jerusalem

Half a millennium later Jerusalem surged with controversy. There was a "great debate" in every strata of life, from the officials in Herod's palace and the priests in the temple to the poorest peasants by the pool of Bethesda. It concerned the policies of a certain Man who was advocating principles which some in high places did not approve. "Crucify Him!" demanded Caiaphas, the high priest, while Pilate, the Roman governor, washed his hands in a symbolic effort to escape responsibility for condemning an innocent man.

The outcome? Well we know it. The Man was crucified; but He was so right that the grave could not hold Him. He burst its walls. He rose from the dead and ascended triumphantly to heaven.

It was then that the world saw God in action. Here was God present in the very midst of history—a reminder to men and women in every age not to overlook Him. How concerned He is with the course of events!—and a thousand times more so since Calvary.

So to-day, as "the great debate" rages, let us lift our eyes from men to God. Let us kneel humbly before Him and seek His wisdom. Let us have faith to believe that He who has led us thus far will lead us yet, if we are willing to accept His leadership and follow in His steps. His hand is on history's helm and He will never let go till His eternal purpose is accomplished and the victory of righteousness, truth, and peace has been achieved.

The Courage of JESUS

By Ernest Cox

EVEN a cursory reading of the gospels will clearly reveal the outstanding courage of Christ. He, more than any other who ever trod this earth, was subject to the malignant attacks of a relentless and unscrupulous foe. The devil worked and schemed untiringly, both by human and superhuman means, to accomplish the Saviour's undoing. For only thus could an erring race be consigned to irretrievable ruin and the divine plan for man's redemption be shown to be ineffective.

Against the manifold and almost overwhelming odds so solidly arrayed against Him, the Son of God stood alone. Alone He entered upon the earthly phase of that momentous struggle which began in heaven itself (Rev. 12:7) and which now continued with mounting intensity on earth—the souls of men as the prize of battle. Well did the apostle Paul declare, as he contemplated the age-long struggle between good and evil: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but . . . against the rulers of the darkness of this world." Eph. 6:12.

It is a profound inspiration to watch this mortal conflict undertaken by Christ on our behalf. It should stir our deepest devotion and awaken anew our utmost loyalty as we see how our Saviour trod for us a path which was beset at every step by Satan's wiles, how with calm assurance and unflinching decision, He moved steadily forward along the way outlined for Him by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23) "before the foundation of the world." John 17:24.

No Compromise with Entrenched Evil

It is, however, a mistake to imagine that our blessed Lord fought any apologetic or con-

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By Anton Dorph

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The Jewish leaders seek to entrap Jesus over the tribute money.

tinuously defensive action. On the contrary, time and again we read how Jesus fearlessly took the onslaught right into the enemy's camp and with divine insight, and consummate dialectic skill, repeatedly routed the aggressions and insinuations of evil.

Hardly had the Saviour's ministry begun before He made it abundantly clear that He would accept no compromise with wrongdoing. Though evil were entrenched in His Father's house—though the priestly authorities themselves condoned an iniquitous traffic, Jesus would have none of it.

With all the authority of a divine displeasure and with an imperious gesture He overruled the mercenary priests and expunged an evil trade from the precincts of the holy temple. Regarding this unequivocal challenge to a corrupt ecclesiastical authority, one inspiring commentator has finely said:

"With searching glance, Christ takes in the scene before Him, as He stands upon the steps of the temple court. . . . As He beholds the

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scene, indignation, authority, and power are expressed in His countenance. The attention of the people is attracted to Him. The eyes of those engaged in their unholy traffic are riveted upon His face.

"The confusion is hushed. The sound of traffic and bargaining has ceased. The silence becomes painful. A sense of awe overpowers the assembly. It is as if they were arraigned before the tribunal of God to answer for their deeds. Looking upon Christ, they behold divinity flash through the garb of humanity. The Majesty of heaven stands as the Judge will stand at the last day—not now encircled with the glory that will then attend Him, but with the same power to read the soul. . . . He speaks, and His clear, ringing voice . . . is heard echoing through the arches of the temple: 'Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise.'" —*The Desire of Ages*, pages 157, 158.

Neither at this time, nor at any other time, was Jesus the influential Head of any powerful "reforming" faction. He represented no large or small section of the community which was interested in correcting the administration of the temple. He represented no one but His heavenly Father and the cause of right. It was predicted of Him, however, that He should "purify the sons of Levi" (Mal. 3:3), and He did, much against their will. But He had to do it alone.

One can only stand in awe before such tremendous moral courage as that. We may grant that when the wretched extortioners saw His "divinity flash through the garb of humanity," that a well-merited craven fear would grip their hearts. Nevertheless, keen traders and proud priests are never persons to be trifled with. They are usually extremely jealous of their official prerogatives. It would require courage of no mean order for an almost unknown peasant-Peacher from Galilee thus to defy and expose the maladministration of Jerusalem's high dignitaries, and not only to expose that corruption, but also Himself forthwith to rectify it.

Credentials of Christ

Jesus knew, moreover, that this would not be, by any means, the end of the matter. Almost immediately, the Saviour's challenge was met by a counter-challenge from the priestly

class. They demanded His credentials. They insisted that He should show some sign to prove that He possessed the right to interfere in the sacred temple affairs.

"What sign showest Thou unto us," they demanded, "seeing that Thou doest these things?" John 2:18.

The Jews probably expected Christ to offer some reasoned explanation which might be construed as being, in part, an apology.

But Jesus, knowing "what was in man" (John 2:25) and far from being thrust on the defensive, made an enigmatic reply which left them more baffled than ever.

"Destroy this temple," Jesus declared, "and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:19.

This further answer, served not only to silence Christ's critics then, but it served also to show to them, three years later, that the Saviour's action, that day, had been fully justified. His resurrection after three days, the glorifying of the most sacred temple of His body, proved His divinity. It also amply proved His authority to correct and cleanse their national temple—His Father's house.

But the Saviour's adversaries never forgot His mysterious reply. They tried to turn it to account against Him at His trial.

"There arose certain, and bare false witness against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands." Mark 14:57, 58.

A little later on, during the agony of our Lord's dying moments, the rankling memory of the heroic temple cleansings were used by His enemies as the basis of one last, bitter jibe.

"And they that passed by railed on Him, . . . saying, Ah, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself, and come down from the cross." Mark 15:29, 30.

Without any doubt, Jesus knew, when He began His ministry, that to interfere in any temple matters would immediately and bitterly antagonize the "vested interests" of those days. After that, there would be many, constantly alert, to undermine His prestige, either openly or secretly to discredit Him, and, as soon as possible, to destroy Him.

Nevertheless Jesus trod His chosen path, unswervingly, unflinchingly, to the bitter end. May we, from His supreme example of invincible courage, glean a like determination to endure to the end, and be saved. (Mark 13:13.)

MITHRA or CHRIST?

By David J. Maffey

THE energies of archæologists in Bible lands have gone very far to prove the accuracy of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, but in other lands also their labours have unearthed relics which bear directly or indirectly upon the Christian message to mankind.

The discovery of a Mithraic temple built in the opening years of the third century A.D. in Northumberland not only adds to the still increasing knowledge of Roman culture and religious customs in Britain, but it reminds us of the ignorance which darkened the minds of men. Mithraism was the final form of sun worship in the Roman Empire, and its importance as a competitor of the Christian faith is emphasized by Professor Gilbert Murray, who wrote of it: "It [Mithraism] had so much acceptance that it was able to impose on the Christian world its own Sun-Day in place of the Sabbath, its Sun's birthday, December 25th, as the birthday of Jesus."—Quoted in "*Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge*," pages 73, 74.

This startling statement will come as a surprise to many and is certainly worth looking into.

The Week in Roman Times

In his book, *Sunday in Roman Paganism*, R. L. Odom says of the week in pagan times:

"The week as it appears in our modern calendar is a hybrid institution. The numerical order of the days is that of the original biblical week, but the nomenclature is that of the pagan planetary [astrological] week of long ago."—Page 11.

The pagan week began with the day of Saturn; then followed the days of the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus. These have been preserved for us in a set of Roman pictures depicting the seven planetary gods of the pagan week in order. They were painted on the wall of a room in Pompeii before it was destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. The set is now preserved in the museum at Naples and they appear in

the following order: Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus.

That the first day of the planetary week, the day of Saturn, corresponded with the seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible can be seen from the writings of several ancient authorities. Dio Cassius (c. A.D. 155-258) wrote a history of Rome in the Greek language. Referring to the capture of Jerusalem by the Roman general Pompey in 63 B.C., when Judea came under Roman influence, and the Jewish custom of observing the Sabbath, he says: "If they [the Jews] had continued defending it [the temple] on all days alike, he could not have got possession of it. As it was they made an exception of what are called the days of Saturn, and by doing no work at all on those days afforded the Romans an opportunity . . . to batter down the wall. . . . They [the Jews] are distinguished from the rest of mankind . . . by the fact that they do not honour any of the usual gods, but show extreme reverence for one particular divinity . . . and likewise dedicate to Him the day called the day of Saturn."—"*Sunday in Roman Paganism*," pages 71, 72. This testimony is also confirmed by Josephus, the Jewish historian.

The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70 was also accomplished on the Sabbath—Saturday, September 8, A.D. 70, and is referred to by Dio Cassius as, "the very day of Saturn, the day which even now the Jews reverence most," and by the Roman author Sextus Julius Frontinus (near the close of the first century) as "the day of Saturn on which it is forbidden for them to do anything serious."—*Ibid.*, page 87.

Pagans the First Sunday-keepers

Now while the Bible Sabbath corresponded with Saturn's day (or Saturday) in the planetary cycle it was the Sun and the Sun's day which was regarded with the greatest esteem by the heathen world. Pliny the Elder, the Roman naturalist, says of the planetary gods: "In the midst of these moves the Sun, whose magnitude and power are the greatest, and who

is the ruler not only of the seasons and of the lands, but even of the stars themselves and of heaven." (*Ibid.*, page 132.) This indicates how cultured Romans regarded the sun in the time of Christ and His apostles.

The early Christian church in its witness to truth and light found in Mithraism the growing religion of sun-worship "a powerful rival already well established and prepared to contest her efforts."—*Ibid.*, page 138.

In this conflict, not only was the truth of God assailed from without, but in certain sections of the church, corruption arose from within. Gnosticism was then in its heyday and played great havoc in the church by attempting to reconcile Christian theology with pagan philosophy. It was really the half-converted Gnostics who started the movement for substituting Sun-day for the true Sabbath in order to increase the separation between Judaism and Christianity, and lessen the gap between the Christian church and the pagan Roman world.

Thus by the middle of the second century A.D. Sunday-keeping Christians were actually accused by pagan writers of being sun-worshippers on this account.

During the second and third centuries of the Christian era, we have the picture of Sunday-keeping paganism and Sunday-keeping Christianity running parallel with one another, the former being the predominant influence

until the beginning of the fourth century A.D., when Sunday-keeping Mithraism began to decline as a result of the emperors from that time favouring Christianity (with the exception of Julian the Apostate). Two hundred years later Mithraism had practically disappeared.

Constantine the Great (A.D. 306-337) is usually heralded as the first Christian emperor, but actually he still further confused heathen and Christian practices in the church. The Christianity of Constantine onward was, in fact, a different religion from the Christianity of the apostles. In A.D. 312, the year of his professed conversion, he introduced into the Christian church the insignia and office of Pontifex Maximus as head of the official religion of the state, derived from the cult of the Invincible Sun. The same procedure was followed by succeeding Roman emperors, until Gratian (A.D. 375-83) laid them aside "as being unbecoming to a follower of Christ."—"Sunday in Roman Paganism," page 179.

In a similar manner Constantine brought paganism and Christianity as close together as he could in his famous (or infamous!) Sunday laws. "Let all the judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades," he ordered, "rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty attend to the business of agriculture."

Philip Schaff, a church historian says of this:

"The Sunday law of Constantine must not be overrated. He enjoined the observance, or rather forbade the public desecration, of Sunday not under the name of *Sabbatum* [Sabbath] or *dies Domini* [Lord's Day], but under its old astrological and heathen title, *dies Solis* [Sunday]. . . . There is no reference whatever in his law either to the fourth commandment or to the (Continued on page 12.)



Sun worship was, as late as the early fourth century A.D., the official religion of the Roman Empire.

In the prophetic Scriptures a great deal of space is given to the destiny of the European nations which were to emerge from the disintegration of the ancient Roman Empire, the fourth universal world power.

That divine emphasis has been underlined by history, for the Middle Ages saw the broken fragments grow into powerful kingdoms, and modern history records their expansion into empires which, by the end of the nineteenth century, dominated the greater part of the earth.

It is noteworthy, however, that in the latter times the prophetic panoramas in the books of Daniel and the Revelation foretell the rise of new secular and ecclesiastical powers beyond the confines of the "Roman earth" which would powerfully affect the course of events in the closing crisis.

The rise of these powers, therefore, besides providing further corroboration of the inspiration of the prophetic page, may be expected also to furnish additional evidence of the arrival of the "time of the end" and the swiftly approaching end of time.

So we naturally ask where and when these powers were to appear and whether there are yet any signs of them?

One of them is brought to view in the latter part of the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation.

After describing in the earlier verses the rise, the period of domination, and the temporary fall of the papal "beast," the Revelator goes on to say: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb." Verse 11.

Clearly this power was to rise *outside* the territorial boundaries of the Roman "beast."



Lengthening Shadows.—8

Spotlight on

By W.

that is, somewhere other than in Western Europe. That it was to come up "out of the earth" rather than from the tumultuous "sea" of the nations would suggest some hitherto empty or almost empty space upon the surface of the earth.

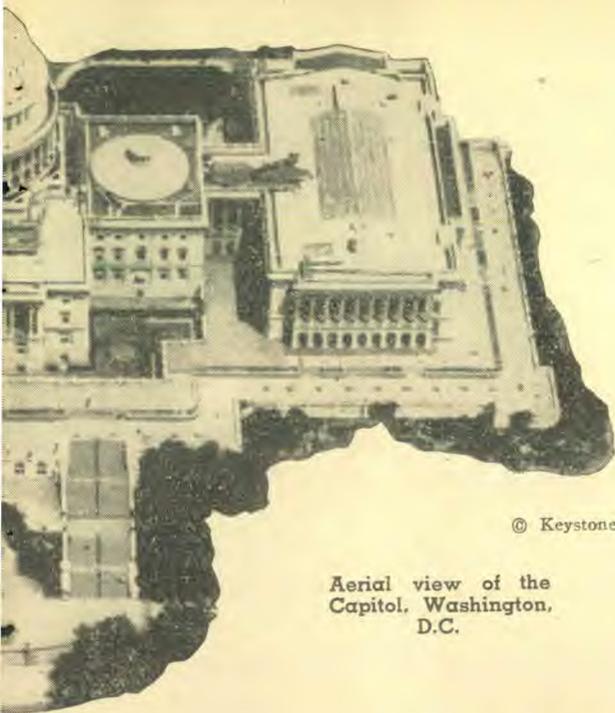
The time of its rise was equally evidently around the time of the fall of the papal beast; in other words, near the beginning of the "time of the end."

And the fact that it is compared to a "lamb" in contrast to the ravening beasts representing the earlier kingdoms, suggests that in its origin and character it would differ profoundly from them.

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American ladies viewing a memorial to the Jamestown colony after its recent unveiling at Blackwall pier, London.

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Aerial view of the
Capitol, Washington,
D.C.

The New World

EMERSON

This is further borne out by the use of the expression "coming up," which is used of the silent and almost imperceptible emergence of a tiny plant from the surrounding soil.

So we ask, did any "different" nation arise round about the end of the eighteenth century and outside the bounds of the Roman earth? One certainly did, and that nation was none other than the United States of America!

"New World" Found

As early as the end of the fifteenth century, Christopher Columbus had discovered a new continent far away across the Western ocean. Undoubtedly as a result of the workings of a

© Newton and Co. Ltd.
The Pilgrim Fathers watch the
"Mayflower" disappearing on
its return journey to England.

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mysterious providence, the Spaniards, who were first to exploit the "new world," which it was at first designated, were led to establish their pioneer colonies in Central and Southern America, leaving North America free for the British, Dutch, Swedish, and French colonists who set out across the Atlantic in the seventeenth century.

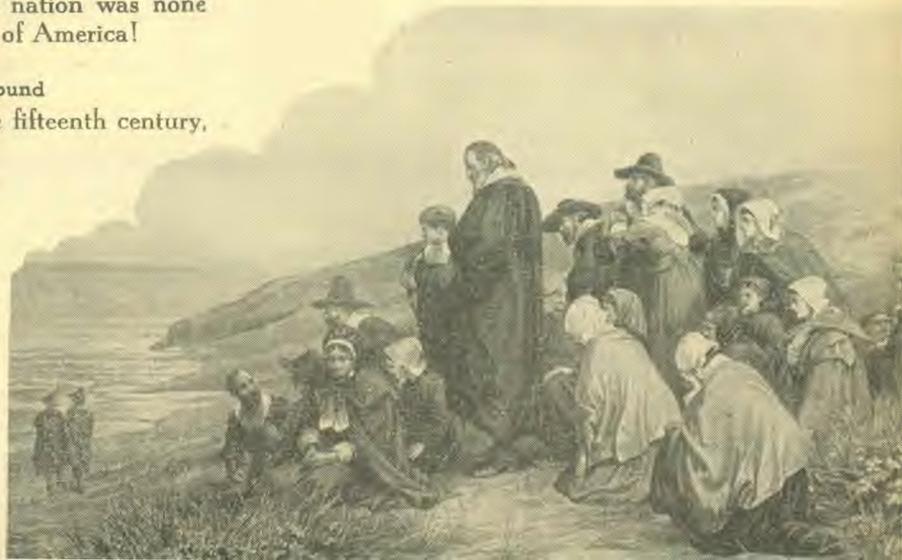
Thus it came about that, beginning with the Jamestown colony in 1607, and the Plymouth settlement of the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620, there were established along the North American seaboard from Florida to Maine a series of independent trading settlements which, by the middle of the eighteenth century, had been united into a British colonial dominion.

Ties that Had to be Severed

Had the affairs of the colonies been sympathetically handled, the ties between Britain and North America might never have been severed. But instead, petty aggravations and grievances were allowed to develop into serious friction and on May 15, 1776, the representatives of the thirteen colonies gathered in Philadelphia with the intention of breaking the last links which bound them to Britain and organizing their independent existence.

Even when they began their deliberations, however, there was no unanimity as to the character of their union, and for almost a month a resolution was under discussion which would have perpetuated several colonies as "free and independent states."

At last, however, this possibility was ruled out and on July 4, 1776, the "United States of America," was born. And in location, timing, and character it fitted exactly the specifications



of the prophecy penned more than a millennium and a half before!

It was outside the territories of the Western European powers; it appeared at precisely the time foretold; it was completely independent of the nations of the Roman earth; its beginnings were in complete contrast to the manner in which the European nations had come into existence, and in the principles of its government as laid down by the founding fathers, it was as different from the kingdoms of the Old World as a lion, or bear, or a leopard is from a "lamb." In witness to this fact the seal of the new nation was significantly inscribed with the legend, "Novus Ordo Seclorum" or "New Order of the Ages."

From "Lamb" to "Dragon"

The prophecy which foretold the rise of the United States went on to relate that this tiny, insignificant little "lamb-power" would, following its establishment, grow and develop until it became a great and powerful beast whose voice would be terrifying as a dragon! (Rev. 13:11, last part.) It would emerge in due time from the isolation and obscurity of its birth to impose its will upon the nations of the Old World. (Verse 12.) And the culminating sign of its power would be to bring "fire . . . down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." Verse 13.

Has the development of the United States followed the course outlined in this prophetic forecast? Indeed it has, and just as in the case of the other "signs" which we have earlier discussed, the fulfilment of the prophecy began very gradually and almost hesitantly in the early part of the nineteenth century, gathered momentum with the passing decades, and has reached its crescendo in the fourth and fifth decades of our twentieth century.

In 1790 the population of the United States was just under four millions. It took thirty years to grow to nine and a half millions, sixty to reach twenty-three millions, and ninety to reach fifty millions. But in 1910 the population had almost doubled again (ninety-two millions); by 1940 it was 132 millions and by April, 1950, it had reached 150,500,000. In the decade 1940-1950 the increase was nearly nineteen millions—equivalent to the total increase of population from 1790 to 1850.

The figures for the national wealth of the U.S.A. show a similar gradual growth at first,

then an increase of momentum, culminating in a twentieth-century crescendo. In 1790 the estimated aggregate wealth of the states was no more than 1,000 million dollars. It had risen only sevenfold by 1850, but in 1912 it had shot up to 186-fold and by 1937 to 321-fold. Between 1939 and 1944 the annual national income of the United States rose by no less than seventy-five per cent. To-day it stands at 280,000 million dollars. By 1955 it is expected to reach not less than 350,000 million dollars.

From Lilliputian to Giant Strength

The story of the increasing military strength of the United States is as spectacular as that of its industry and commerce. When peace was signed with England, Congress ordered the complete disbandment of the army except for "twenty-five privates to guard the stores at Fort Pitt and fifty-five to guard the stores at West Point." An army of just eighty soldiers! There was certainly no question as to the "lamb-like" character of the new nation in those days!

When the Constitution went into force, the United States had a regular army of only one regiment! And even after the Mexican War and the Indian wars of the far West the strength of the armed forces was less than 13,000 right down to the Civil War.

After the great mobilization for the Civil War the "lamb-like" nature of the nation reasserted itself and at the beginning of 1896 the U.S. army numbered no more than 25,000 men.

The U.S. Navy in its beginnings was almost as microscopic as its army, comprising, after the signing of the peace treaty, just five ships!

It was really not until World War I that the "lamb" power first began its metamorphosis. But in that conflict the number of American soldiers rose to 3,700,000 of which 2,000,000 were fighting in Europe. With the entrance of the United States into World War II, American military might rocketed to an army of 8,300,000, a naval strength of 4,059,794, and an air force of 418,000.

To-day, while remobilization is still far behind America's World War II figures, with the possession in overwhelming superiority of the atom bomb, which is literally "fire from heaven," the American fighting force is without question the most powerful in the world.

(Continued on back page.)

Who Will Be Saved?

By R. D. Vine

SOMEHOW, in the heart of almost every man and woman, is a natural longing for heaven. Their ideal state may, of course, be christened by some other name—such as Utopia, Nirvana, or Valhalla—but it is invariably a place far different from our present environment. With many, however, heaven is merely a figment of the imagination. They believe that heaven has no reality and that it never will have.

Not that they would refuse an offer of citizenship in a place of unsullied beauty where wars and strife, suffering and even death, would be eternally excluded. Indeed, nothing would please anyone more than a perpetual life of usefulness and genuine enjoyment, in a place where all the inhabitants lived as a great family of affectionate brothers and sisters. But whereas so very many vaguely visualize and hope for such an ideal state, they have no expectation that such a hope will ever be actually realized.

One of the glories of the Christian message, is the certainty of heaven, and the reality of that truly ideal state for which men have yearned ever since sin inflicted its disfiguring marks of suffering and death on this old world.

Heaven a Real Place

Jesus referred to heaven as a real place. The Bible says that after His resurrection, He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:11) and that He Himself promised to come, visibly, a second time to this earth of ours, to take His followers to those mansions in heaven which He has gone to prepare. (John 14:3.) The Bible, of course, tells of God's plan completely to renovate this world after the millennium, even describing the descent to this earth of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is destined to be the new world's future metropolis. (Rev. 21:2.)

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By Robert T. Ayers

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"What are these which are arrayed in white robes?" Rev. 7:13.

Thus, for eternity will be maintained a blissful condition of heaven on earth.

The question is, however, who will enjoy the bliss of that future state? Unfortunately, not everyone. "Broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction," said Jesus, "and many there be which go in thereat." Whereas "narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. 7:13, 14. Again, our Lord portrayed an unhappy scene when He declared: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 7:21.

Not that heaven's gate is opened merely for the privileged few. All are urged to enter. All have the opportunity of qualifying for these heavenly joys. But unfortunately, "few there be" who take this opportunity.

"Marks" of the Saved

There are two outstanding and essential things about those who shall enter heaven at

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last. The first is their faith in Jesus Christ as the Forgiver of sin, and as the One who, by virtue of their faith in Him, has paid the death penalty for their sins. The second is their loyal obedience to His law—the Ten Commandments.

Without Christ no man can enter heaven. For no matter how virtuous our lives, the Bible declares that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," and that "the wages of sin is death." Unless, by faith, we accept Christ's death on Calvary as the substitutionary payment for our sins, then we ourselves must die the death—eternal death, that will for ever exclude us from the bliss of heaven. Thus it is that Paul declares: "Without faith it is impossible to please" God. (Heb. 11:6.)

Now if our faith is genuine, we will, as an expression of our gratitude and love to Christ for having paved the way of our entrance to heaven, be obedient to His holy law. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," He said. And again: "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." The true child of God will find obedience no hardship, but rather a most convenient and satisfying way of serving the good Lord who has done so much for him.

John visualized that great group of men and women who would be welcomed in heaven at last, and described them thus: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12.

Freed to Serve

In the days of slavery a strong, skilful negro was standing dejectedly on the auction block, as men bid higher and higher for him. Finally, the last bid was accepted—the highest price that had been paid for any slave that day. As the negro was led away to his new master, he wondered how he would be received. Would he be sworn at? Would he be lashed with the whip?

"Sam, I've bought you," said his master.

"Yes, master," replied Sam.

"Sam," said the master, and his voice became very tender: "I bought you so that you can go free."

Sam could scarcely believe his ears, but looking into his master's kindly eyes and smiling face, he knew that the man was sincere.

"What will you do with your freedom, Sam?"

"O master," was the immediate reply from the negro who dropped to his knees, "I'll be your slave for ever."

Friend, Jesus has paid the price for your freedom, for your salvation: not with silver or gold, but with His own precious blood. He died that you might live. What shall be your response? Can you do less than render Him willing obedience and service? He then will guide you safely through present perils to the glories of that better land.

Mithra or Christ?

(Continued from page 7.)

resurrection of Christ."—*"Sunday in Roman Paganism,"* page 184.

The effect of the law, however, was that "Sunday was observed with greater solemnity than it had formerly been."—*Eusebius in "Ecclesiastical History,"* cent. 4, part 2, chap. 4, sec. 5.

Rome Uses Her Seal

Unfortunately for the cause of truth and the advance of the Gospel, the Roman church which rose to predominant power in the fourth and subsequent centuries, instead of returning to the teaching and practices of Christ and the apostles, set its seal on the perversions of Gnosticism and State Christianity. Among other things they specifically legislated against Sabbath observance and enforced Sunday observance.

Thus Canon 29 of the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364) reads: "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honour, and, as being Christians, shall if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ."—*Hefele's "Councils,"* Vol. 2, book 6, par. 95.

Which Day Should We Keep?

In the light of these facts our decision between Sabbath and Sunday, between Mithra and Christ, should be simple.

The Sabbath of God, given to Adam in Eden, emphasized again to Israel in the wilderness (Exod. 16), included in God's ten laws given to man amid supernatural splendour at Mount Sinai, was observed by Jesus (Luke 4: 16), by the disciples, including Paul, the apostle

to the Gentiles. (Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 28:17.) This day, which God so clearly demonstrated that He intended men to keep holy, was quite wrongly and indeed criminally declared by men professing to be Christians as merely Jewish. As if they were better fitted to decide what was Christian than Christ Himself, they almost completely turned away the church from the true Sabbath of the Lord, and to-day the Roman Catholic Church actually claims the changing of Sabbath observance to Sunday observance to be the proof of her authority.

But God has never authorized any man or men to alter His law, and the apostle John tells us that breaking the law has always been and still is sin. (1 John 3:4.)

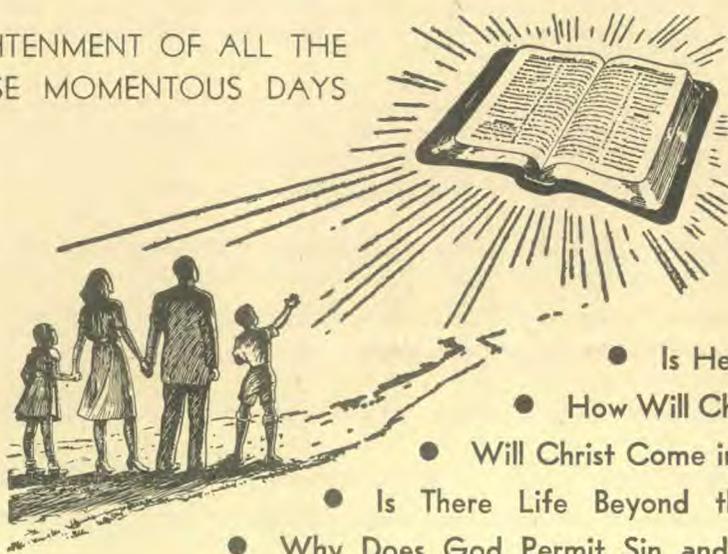
Some say, Yes, we know that Saturday is the true Sabbath, but what about all Christians

in times past who in their lives have demonstrated the power of God and yet have been Sunday-keepers? The fact that that is so is one of the great proofs that God is loving and merciful in His dealings with men. When Christians ignorantly do wrong we are told by the apostle Paul that God overlooks their ignorance, but when a knowledge of the truth comes to men He commands them to repent. (Acts 17:30.) That knowledge God is bringing to His church in these latter times, and in harmony with this revelation John describes the saints as keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus. (Rev. 14:12.) If we would be among these faithful and obedient ones we will by faith keep all the commandments of God, including the true Sabbath of the Lord.

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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

"Selfish" Jean

"YOU'RE selfish, that's what you are, Jean; you always want the baby," retorted Betty.

"All right, you can have her," returned Jean, and in a moment Baby Ann was cosily reposing in Betty's arms.

Everything went well for a while. Ann was all smiles, and cooed away as all little babies do sometimes. But oh, dear, in such a little while the smiles turned to tears, and cooing changed to loud crying, as all little babies do at other times.

"Oh, keep quiet, Ann! What are you making all that awful noise for, I'd like to know?" said Betty, trying to quieten Baby Ann. But Baby Ann, like all little Baby Anns, just wouldn't be quietened, and that was that.

"Oh, where's Jean?" exclaimed Betty, who like so many other people was fast losing interest in Baby Ann, now that she wasn't quite so good. "Jean, Jean, oh, here you are, Jean; you can have Baby Ann now," and Baby Ann changed hands again.

But somehow, I am sure I don't know how, Jean just didn't seem to mind that Baby Ann was crying, and crying, too, as though her very life depended upon it. No, she just went on cuddling her, and talking to her like all good

nurses do. And that's the way it always was; everybody wanted Baby Ann when Baby Ann was good, but oh, dear, oh, dear, nobody wanted Baby Ann when she was not so good—nobody, I mean, except Jean, and, of course, Mother!

It was such a strange thing that no matter how bad Baby Ann was it was never very long before she was quiet again when "selfish" Jean took charge. Who was "selfish" Jean? There, I am always forgetting something. Why, Jean was Baby Ann's elder sister, and not so very old, either. And so it came out, of course, that Jean was always greatly in demand when Baby Sister was not very good.

Now, it's a funny thing, but Jean wasn't any good at giving a talk in young people's meeting or saying a poem or reading the mission exercise in Sabbath-school. She felt all nervous inside—oh, you all feel that, you say. Of course you do; but you don't feel that way for a whole week until it makes you go off your food and feel quite bilious, I am sure. But you see that's the way it was with Jean, and everybody would say, "Oh, don't ask Jean; she won't do it," whenever there was anything to be said in young people's meeting or in the Sab-

bath-school, or in the club. "Oh, no, don't waste your time asking Jean; she won't do it; ask somebody else."

And that is how it always ended. All the other girls would stand up and do their parts, and everyone would say, "Wasn't that a nice talk? Wasn't that poem beautifully delivered? That story, wasn't it wonderfully told? Didn't Helen render that solo touchingly? But poor Jean, isn't it a pity that she can't do anything?"

And just then a baby would cry and a poor harassed mother would try and soothe it, and you know how hard that is when Baby doesn't want to be soothed. I do, anyway; when I take a baby it is just determined that it won't be soothed. Well, it wouldn't be long before Jean had that baby, and in less than no time at all that baby would be just as good as good can be!

Going home along the noisy main street, over the bridge, under the trees, and along the back street, gaily and happily they wend their way as the sun sinks toward the western hills.

Does someone look tired, perhaps her case is a little heavy? Who is the one to notice? Of course, you've guessed. Why, it is Jean. Yes, it is always Jean; dear, helpful Jean.

Yes, Gordon read his piece perfectly; Arthur gave a most encouraging talk; Bessie recited her piece better than she ever did before; you could have heard a pin drop while Doris told her story; and Helen's solo was, well, was all you could have wished; but poor Jean, she just gets all queer inside if she has to say anything; she's too nervous to attempt it. Poor Jean, she can't do anything.

But in many a home that evening tired mothers who had

almost forgotten what they heard, remembered the young girl who took and carried the case, who soothed the tired baby, and guided the toddlers' trembling footsteps; and as many a mother fell asleep that night the angels heard her murmured prayer, "God bless the girl who helped the heavy burdened."—R.C.W.

this much well, but he also sweeps the front path.

Any Minus boy or girl can change to a Plus boy or girl by adding something to what he or she is already expected to do. Try looking around when you have your next job to do, and see what you can add to your work that will promote you to the plus class.—Dew-drops.

Sunbeams' Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

I HOPE you have your membership cards hung where you can easily see them and I hope too that you often read the promises.

Promise number one says: "I will read a portion of the Bible every day." That surely must be the best rule of all, because if we keep it faithfully we shall become like Jesus, and He will enable us to keep all the other promises.

I have room to answer only one of your many welcome letters this time. It is from Pat Coates. She tells me she has passed her scholarship exam. Congratulations, Pat. It was so nice to read about your thoughtfulness in giving your mother a birthday present.

Pat hopes all Sunbeams remember their mothers' birthdays. I suggest that those who have no money for a present should try to make Mother's birthday especially happy by doing some little "love job" for her. She will then have time for a little more leisure, and feel so glad because she knows you love her.

God bless you all, as you shine for Jesus.

Yours affectionately,
AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition No. 10

Prize-winners. — Jeffrey Heath, 42 Roseberry Street, Liverpool, 8. Age 12; Gillian Ball, Wayside, Bere Ferrers, Yelverton, Devon. Age 5.

Honourable Mention.—Elaine Bunker (Tavistock); Neville Kerry (Norwich); Barbara Spicer (Birmingham, 23); Joseph Stanford (London, E.16); Pat Knowles (Richmond); Eleonore Baron (Church); Robin James (New Addington); David Slama (Torquay); Jean Sparkes (London, S.W.4); Lydia Harris (Maxey).

Those who tried hard.—Margaret Cutler (Langley); Amy Randlesome (Beccles); Kathleen Weatherall (Coventry); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Albert Margaroff (Rickmansworth); Barbara Case (Birmingham, 6); Josephine Dunstan (St. Mabyn); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Olive King (Chelmsford); Jacqueline Schooley (Portsmouth-by-Sea); Susan Clee (Leeds, 11); Esther Dunstan (St. Mabyn); Graham Linger (Beccles); Janice Jones (Merthyr Tydfil); Andrew McIlvenna (London, S.W.16); Patricia White (Plymouth); Geoffrey Trigg (Churcham); Christine Rugg (Bristol, 3); Barrie Precious (Watford); Peter Walker (London, N.10); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Marion Paget (Wokingham); 2 No Name.

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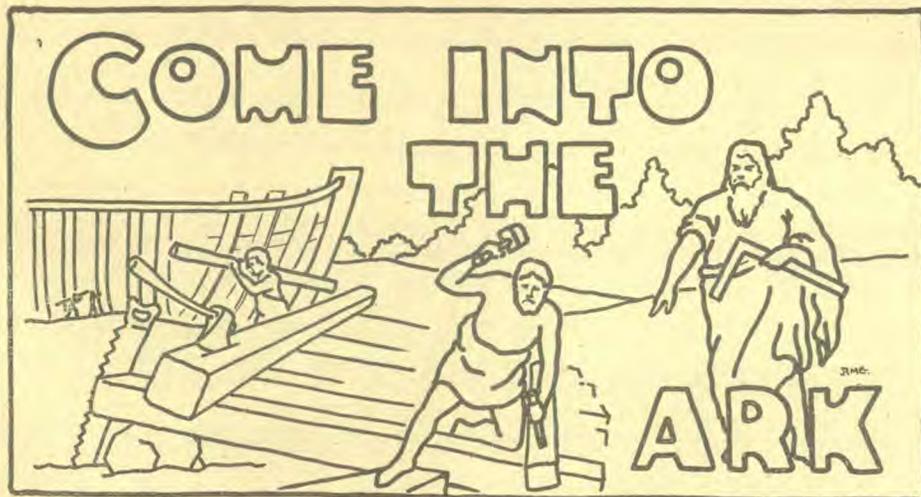
FROM MINUS TO PLUS

A PLUS sign is just a minus sign with something added to it. Look in your arithmetic book and see if this isn't so.

There are Plus boys and girls, and Minus boys and girls. The Minus folk do less work than is expected of them. If a Minus girl dusts the living-room, she doesn't lift up the books on the table and dust under them. If a Minus boy sweeps the front porch, he doesn't sweep between the posts of the railing.

However, if a Plus girl dusts the living-room, she always finds something extra to do. She straightens the books on the bookcase shelves, and dusts beneath the runner.

When a Plus boy sweeps the porch, he not only does



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than July 26th.

STRAWS in the WIND

LOOK UP!

"THE world has forgotten in its concern with Left and Right that there is an Above and Below," said an American broadcaster recently. This reminds us of Christ's own counsel for those who would be living in the troublous last days: "Look up; . . . for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28.

FAR EAST TO MIDDLE EAST

"It may not be long," says the *Catholic Times*, "before world attention will be sharply distracted from the Far East by the crisis of the Middle East. For Russia, with her huge expanse, is in a position to play both theatres with an economy of forces."

Spotlight on the New World

(Continued from page 10.)

"Americans," asserted Lord Woolton on his return from the United States recently, "know they are the dominating power in the world."

The erstwhile "lamb" has become fiercer than any of the "beasts" of the Old World and the voice of America is the voice of a "dragon." And as Mr. George Marshall declared in a lecture to university students in Los Angeles, America has rocketed to this pinnacle of power in the space of a single decade. "In the past," he said, "nations have risen to positions of leadership through a gradual process, usually measured in centuries." But the United States "in a single decade . . . has been projected into a position involving responsibility greater, perhaps, than any nation in modern history."—Quoted in "*The National Message*," April, 1948.

In the past decade also, the curtain of "splendid isolation" which America had decided upon as her settled policy has been torn to shreds, and she has come forth to keep what President Roosevelt described as her "rendezvous with destiny."

The founding fathers were determined to have as little to do with the bad Old World as they could, and President Monroe enunciated the famous Monroe Doctrine which, in effect, told the Old World powers to "keep off the grass" of the American "lamb's" feeding grounds.

But the same destiny which securely established the nation in the teeth of Old World opposition in the early nineteenth century, turned the face of America, in spite of its own historical predispositions and avowed intentions, back again in the twentieth toward the continent from which it sprang.

And to-day, as prophecy so clearly foretold, the United States, animated with a "sense of international destiny," is dictating and bolstering with her men and means the policies of the Western European powers against the Communist East.

Certainly no one can dispute James Burnham's assertions in his book, *The Struggle for the World*: "The responsibility for the future of civilization falls unavoidably, to-day, upon the United States. The fate of the world in this epoch will be decided by the United States."—Pages 195, 196.

Perhaps the prophecy which so clearly foretold the nation's rise and has been so spectacularly fulfilled in our time will provide some indication as to what the United States will do. Next time we will see.

(Next Time: "The 'Conversion' of America.")

